



Onboarding Remotely as a New Employee

Starting a new job for anyone is always an anxious time. But imagine starting a new job with a company where you may not have met your manager or colleagues face to face, or even stepped foot into the office. That's the reality for many right now whilst the restrictions of COVID-19 remain.

Onboarding a new employee to an organisation has always played a significant part in the success and retention of the individual. The good news is that most employers have established onboarding procedures (even if a little dated), which for the best part, can still be used and that can be adapted to the current situation.

However, the onus of onboarding shouldn't all be placed on the employer. As an employee, it is more critical than ever to be part of your own success. In order to understand how to ensure your own success, it's best to understand what you may miss out on by not being in an office with your new colleagues. Think about your ability to easily ask how something is done, and how you will pick up on how things are done and what the acceptable company culture is, if you can't see it.

Be Prepared: you've invested and promised a lot in the lead up to starting this job, so as soon you've agreed to join, start working on being ready for work....don't leave it till the last minute.

Are you Equipped?: that means having a dedicated working space/ home office setup – for most that means desk, proper chair, and good internet connection. Work with your employer to organise (and often prompt) what equipment you will need and where to send it. Ask what they will be supplying and what they won't, so you know what you'll need to arrange. Employers will think about the obvious items like a laptop, phone and any speciality tools/ material, but often its little things like notebooks, pens and printers which will be overlooked or taken for granted.

Go Digital: technology will be your best friend. There are so many great tools and services available to us but you may not have ever used them, or may have used them but not in a professional setting.

- Get the name and contact details of the IT support team. You'll need help getting onto VPN's, shared drives, opening colleague calendars etc
- Get yourself set up on DocuSign. This will save you printing and scanning endless amounts of paper.
- Ask for an electronic copy of the company onboarding documents/ welcome handbook as a PDF. This will become your 'go-to' when you don't know who to go to! Make sure you take particular note of key contact names, numbers and emails.
- Your diary to start with will be filled with meetings (if your employer has done it right) to be introduced to new colleagues and key stakeholders. Use these meeting to gather as much information about the business and the way things are done as possible, and ask if it's ok to contact them should you need assistance. Where possible, ask for these meetings to be video conferences (after all, originally they were most likely supposed to be in person). There are so many great services from Facetime, Skype, Zoom to the Microsoft Teams. Just because you are working from home, doesn't mean you can wear your gym gear or not do your hair. When you look the part, you will feel the part, and it demonstrates to your new team that you are making an effort.



- Getting up to speed on company systems will be critical to your productivity. Pay attention when going through System training, and note that there are often webinars and support teams that software providers offer on an ongoing basis to ensure you maximise the use of their product.

Communicate: we can't stress the importance of this enough. You have so many channels at your disposal from phone, email, video conferencing, messengers, social media, apps etc, that there is no excuse. Be sure to ask loads of questions and ensure you are clear on expectations, targets and key milestone that the business will measure your success on. We are a huge advocate for having a mentor or buddy system. Got along well with someone you've spoken to? Why not ask if you can regularly check in with them and get their support. When you don't feel comfortable going to your manager, you can lean on this individual.

Go The Extra Mile: these are unprecedented times and because of this, you need to be doing all you can to ensure this new job is a success. You should think about:

- Setting up regular calls with the recruiter that put you into the job to gain feedback they've received on your employment in the role
- Make the effort to join social activities. Organisations during COVID-19 have created events like virtual trivia nights; Friday night drinks via video conferencing or even group online fitness programs.
- Be seen and be heard. Let the team know that you are on that group call, or volunteer to assist with a task or project.

Starting a new job with a new company is an anxious time for most and we need to acknowledge in the current climate this is heightened. But with the right preparation, utilising the right tools and good communication, your commencement with your new organisation in a remote setting can not only be a viable option, but it can also be very successful for both parties, and the start of a new great career.