

Attracting Top Remote Talent

By 2025, almost 23% of the U.S. workforce is expected to work fully remote, according to Upwork. That's nearly double the percentage of people who were working remotely full time prior to the pandemic. As more organizations embrace long-term remote or hybrid workplace models, employers will continue to compete for their industry's top candidates.

Remote work is quickly becoming one of the most desirable benefits an employer can offer in today's tight labor market. This article discusses unique qualities of strong remote workers and best practices for attracting and recruiting them.

Qualities of Successful Remote Workers

Employers want to appeal to remote workers, but that doesn't just mean any remote worker. Employers, especially those cash-strapped by the COVID-19 pandemic, cannot afford to hire just any applicant, so it's important to be able to spot the best performing remote workers.

In addition to industry- or role-specific skills and competencies, there are some qualities unique to remote talent that employers should look for when selecting candidates. Successful remote employees typically demonstrate the following traits:

- **Strong written communication skills**—In most offices, the majority of workplace communication happens via email, chat and other digital platforms. Therefore, remote employees typically exhibit strong written communicators by being clear, concise and consistent in their work.
- **Interpersonal skills**—Remote employees need strong interpersonal skills, for both one-on-one and group settings. Interpersonal skills include teamwork, influence, negotiation, conflict resolution and emotional intelligence.

- **Critical thinking skills**—Ambiguity and daily hurdles are likely, so employees who can research solutions and resolve issues on their own without depending on others for every decision are likely to succeed in a remote environment.
- **Eager to ask questions**—Although independence is key, employers may also consider candidates who aren't afraid to ask questions, especially to get clarification or understanding about rules and guidelines. If something isn't clear enough for an employee, that fact can help identify communication or education gaps in workflows.
- **Self-confidence**—Since remote workers are working independently and are not physically present with other employees, they cannot be frequently second-guessing themselves. Employers should look for employees who can make solid, informed decisions—and in a reasonable time period.
- **Accountability**—Remote employees have to be on top of their daily tasks while also motivating themselves to advance their careers. A successful remote employee is one who cares about work results and does what they say they are going to do.

Remote candidates willing to go above and beyond will thrive in a virtual workplace.

How to Appeal to Remote Workers

As employers recruit more remote employees than ever before to fill their needs, they should be prepared for unique challenges. First and foremost, organizations should already have solid and proven virtual recruiting and hiring processes in place so they can continually measure and optimize effectiveness. Additionally, the following strategies could help organizations attract and recruit top-quality remote workers:

- **Invest in technology.** Technology is also a component of the overall candidate experience. For example, using a quality camera and microphone will say a lot about an organization when speaking to candidates virtually. Conversely, low-budget equipment may send a negative message about how much the company is willing to invest in employee equipment. It's crucial to continue to monitor, evaluate and optimize companywide recruitment and hiring processes to attract and recruit remote talent. Candidates will appreciate a clear and effective recruitment process as they engage with recruiters and hiring managers.
- **Offer competitive, nontraditional benefits.** Organizations should ensure they are offering competitive benefits that meet employees' evolving needs in order to stand out against the competition. Some ideas include providing home office equipment or a technology stipend, flexible scheduling, professional development programs, coworking space access, unlimited paid time off and gym memberships.
- **Engage in virtual hiring events.** Employers can connect with remote candidates at digital job fairs and similar hiring events. For example, employers can host their own virtual fair or webinar to attract candidates interested in a specific industry or professional topic. Employers are also shifting to communicating with candidates through personalized messages, virtual chats and video calls.
- **Ask for referrals.** Employers can describe the skills that the organization is looking for with current employees, and ask if they'd promote the job opening with their networks, reiterating that the role is fully remote. A fully remote role widens the talent pool, so employers are able to take advantage of existing employees' connections regardless of location.
- **Use the right channels to post job openings.** Employers may consider advertising and recruiting for open roles on job boards and social networks that are dedicated to remote work.
- **Build a strong social media presence.** Organizations looking to recruit virtually should maintain at least one social media profile, post content regularly and interact with followers. Having an active social media presence will help encourage candidates to follow and like the content the company posts. In turn, this provides a steady stream of passive recruiting leads. Employers can consider highlighting the remote work culture, giving a glimpse into the typical day of remote employees and featuring employee work locations. Remote employees will be especially interested if a role offers a good work-life balance, so employers should consider authentic ways to demonstrate that concept on social media channels.
- **Manage an online reputation.** Since we live in a digital age, prospective employees have many channels available to them as they search for and discover information about organizations. Reputation is all about public perception, whether it's based on facts or not. In addition to social media channels, employers should be monitoring various online channels and websites for mentions of their organization.
 - **Claim company profiles and post details on employment websites.** This allows an organization to add critical details that job seekers consider before applying for work at any company, such as the number of employees, industry details, company mission, benefits, perks and photos.
 - **Expect a range of reviews, and consider them as feedback.** While the hope is that most online feedback will be positive, employers should consider negative reviews as a learning opportunity.
 - **Know that an employer brand can change.** Employers who seek to transform their brand can do just that. Setting manageable expectations is necessary because it won't necessarily change overnight.

Some people are stronger remote workers than others. Therefore, it's important for employers to evaluate candidates based on both job-specific competencies and traits of effective remote workers, while also considering unique strategies to appeal to top remote workers.

Conclusion

A 100% virtual workforce may help organizations stay ahead of the competition and combat the talent shortage. Contact us today to learn more about the unique needs of remote talent and for additional recruitment resources.

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