

Rewiring Your Hiring

Navigating the Pandemic While Evolving Your Processes

Supporting business in a dramatically changing world

If we look back to the halcyon days before the Pandemic, we can see just how much of some of the basic things in life have changed. Who would have imagined a world where we don't have children's parties? Where we don't 'just pop out for a quick drink' and where we frown at each other if a naked nose appears brazenly above a face mask in a supermarket? And yet, here we are, and the pace of change has been breath-taking.

At the time of writing, around 10 million people have had their first dose of the vaccine, COVID virus variants are still constantly emerging, challenging our hopes of a speedy return to a more familiar world and yet in all of this, people are still trying to build their businesses. All across the world, we see innovation and profiteering: the best of business and the worst. In the UK, the business community is trying to keep going under the dual yokes of Brexit and Covid. One thing is certain, this is hard work. Businesses are in varying states of precariousness, some have furloughed workers for the third time, some are on the brink of failure and some already have failed. We mourn the loss of those jobs but at the same time, hold out hope for those businesses who are somehow managing to keep going and in some cases even expand.

Human Resources must go on

As the wheels of commerce grind on, so do the annual people processes within those businesses; people work, they get paid, they get promoted, they get furloughed, they return to work, they take annual leave, and they use their company benefits to protect their families (employee assistance programmes and private healthcare must be in overdrive right now).

Behind all this is a Human Resources function that drives, guides and supports all this activity whilst somehow still being on the receiving end of everything the world throws at it. I speak from experience. I've seen colleagues in HR being placed in some really difficult situations as a result of questionable leadership decisions and I know there's a book in me just itching to come out!

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So, what's changed the most? For me, the most obvious change is the hiring and joining process.

Employer brand and social media

According to Hubspot/Talkwalker 2021 Social Media Trends Report, brands need to bring the 'Covid Four Cs' into play in their social media. These are vital as consumers turn to brands for information and reassurance relating to the Pandemic. It is not too great a stretch to apply this to employer branding:



Hiring remotely

For the sake of safety - where possible – hiring should be undertaken remotely. This change brings with it many benefits. It can be done faster. Candidates don't need to take a whole day off for an interview as a Zoom call can be done discreetly in an hour with no need for travel, which potentially also makes it cheaper for the candidate. Pre-recorded videos can also allow a recruiter the chance to review the answers to the most critical questions and quickly select the right candidates to put forward in the process. However, while we are outlining the many benefits of remote recruitment, the business needs to make sure it is actually ready to hire remotely.

Using technology well for remote hiring

Firstly, is the right technology in place? Most organisations now have an ATS but is it adaptable to remote hiring? Does it have a robust video platform and are those videos recordable and storable so that they can be reviewed for quality or even challenge?

Are hiring managers conversant with the technology to ensure a smooth interview experience and not a fiasco fit for national news? After all, a calm and prepared interviewer is more likely to lead a productive interview.

Reviewing processes for remote hiring

This then necessitates a review of the hiring process to ensure that any newly automated steps are thoroughly quality checked and documented and if necessary, hiring managers are re-briefed/trained on what to look out for and how to prepare.

With this in mind, a good organisation needs to make sure that the candidates also have the right level of technology in order to feel calmly competent during the remote interview. They need time to make sure other members of the household are 'contained' in order to avoid intrusion and distraction during the interview. It makes sense for employers to prepare a briefing document to help candidates prepare. Hints on lighting, what to wear, what to expect etc. will always be welcomed and drive-up better reassurance and engagement through the process.



Selecting for successful remote working skills

Many administrative and management roles are now likely to feature some degree of remote working and remote leadership therefore it makes sense to ensure the skills and qualities needed to be successful in those roles are re-evaluated.

Things to increase focus on are communication, organisation, self-awareness and self-motivation. It is well known that a good selection process decreases the risk of losing good candidates early into their tenure (we have noticed anecdotal evidence of an increase in turnover in the first three months since the beginning of the Pandemic – that is surely going to be expensive!) Leading on from this, how will the organisation run a smooth onboarding experience? Is there a process and a system in place? How will the organisation make up for lack of contact whilst focusing on preserving and imparting a strong, healthy culture?

How will you
impart a healthy
culture while
onboarding
remotely?

In short – how will you know your new hires feel welcomed, valued and useful? Those are three important things any new hire wants to experience in order to rapidly meld into the organisation and become productive, thereby increasing their sense of self-worth.

Cultural and global considerations

One final observation I would make is also the need to respect cultural differences, which are more likely to exist in globally remote teams. A good leader respects the fact that others have families to care for and simply need time to step away from the screen and refresh for the next day.

I have personally experienced a lack of awareness of time-zones from past managers (“It’s 10pm in the UK” ... “oh yeah, I always forget about the time difference. Anyway, whilst I’ve got you, please can you quickly send out a report to the divisional MD so that they have it for first thing in the morning otherwise they will be chasing me whilst I’m taking the kids to ballet class?” Oh, the knuckle biting irony!)

Being flexible and catering for others’ individual needs through the recruitment process says so much about the culture of the organisation. A negative experience can shoot rapidly around the social media world and can damage years of good work done to build a positive employer brand.

In summary

What is really evident is the further need to humanise the recruitment process.

The Pandemic has shown up the weaknesses in our global society; now is our chance to undo the mistakes of the past.

Work Horizons

At Work Horizons we are highly experienced in HR strategy, helping organisations to address profound challenges and make the shift to a more purposeful, productive working culture. If you would like to discuss any of these ideas, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Please visit workhorizons.com or call 0121 663 1710.

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