# Remote Work:
# The Employers Guide.

Remote work continues to rise in popularity, with more and more workers wanting the flexibility associated with remote working.

Many organisations and businesses are now listening to their employees - and to the statistics that remote work improves productivity - hiring remote workers and letting current staff transition to working from home.

Recruiting for remote work allows organisations to expand their search for qualified talent worldwide. Yet, hiring and managing remote employees is still uncharted territory for many. The process for hiring a remote worker is different to what we have come to expect.

The approach may seem unusual and involve considering a few new things however there are strategies you can implement to make the process easier, allowing you to find the right candidate for the role.

**Firstly**, before you post the job, here are some things to think about:

> **What qualities, skills, and experience are you looking for?**

> and

> **What qualities, skills, and experience will a remote worker in this position need to be successful?**

**Remote work is not for everyone and therefore does require specific skills, more than others, to be successful. Some attribu[tes] you might want to consider in a remote worker include:**

- **Self-motivated**. There are more distractions and opportunities to slack off when working from home.

- Good **time management**. As a remotee, it is easy to overwork which can quickly lead to burnout.

- **Organisation Skills.** As remote workers predominantly complete tasks and projects alone, organisation is key. They must organise themselves and their schedules to meet their various deadlines.

- **Tech-savvy.** Most remote roles rely on technology to help them complete their work. This is why many remote positions often exist within the marketing, web design and customer service fields (work that entails using technology regularly). Therefore, a good understanding of technology is beneficial.

- **An independent worker.** This includes having the ability to problem solve - overcoming challenges on their own or with minimal assistance.

- **A strong communicator**. Good communication skills are critical for remote workers. They need to be capable of replying to all forms of communication - being especially clear and concise - and responding promptly.

Once you know what you are looking for - the skills that will make the remote worker successful in the role - you can begin writing the job description (making sure to include the requirements.) These are the attributes you will use to screen candidates during the recruitment process
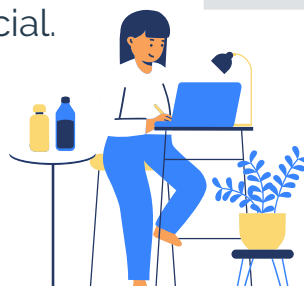
# The Job Advert

An inclusive and accessible job advert is beneficial for the employer as it will subsequently reach a larger, more diverse audience of potential candidates that otherwise may get missed. When creating your inclusive job advert, there are some key things you should do:

## Make sure your job applications are accessible.

- Include an audio description for pictures

- Is the website you are using accessible for screen readers?

- Make sure the text isn't too bright or garish. - preview the advert before you post it - you need to know it looks okay.

- Use short sentences and brief paragraphs. Instead of italics or underlying words, use a larger font and embolden words you want to highlight (for candidates who may have visual problems or dyslexia).

## Make your requirements clear.

- E.g. what do you want from a cover letter?

- What experience is required?

- What skills are needed?

## Have an inclusive description.

- Use inclusive language, leaving out gender-based terms as well as unnecessary jargon. (there is no point overcomplicating it.)

- Start with a job title that leaves out any hint at gender or industry preference.

- Make it simple and focus on the job at hand, eliminating masculine and feminine words from the job posting.

- Emphasize job responsibilities rather than requirements, including removing degree requirements where they are not essential.

## Include the salary.

- Understand your salary budget and constraints

- Make the salary, budget and constraints clear in the job posting.

# What are the **Biggest Struggles** for Remote Workers?

Employers new to supporting remote staff need to understand the factors that can make remote work difficult. Acknowledgement of the challenges remote workers face is the first course of action in combating these issues and helping their staff to succeed. According to the 2021 report conducted by Buffer, the top five challenges inherent to Remote Work include:

## 1. Lack of communication and collaboration:

Both managers and their employees have express concerns about the decline in face-to-face interaction, with lack of collaboration and communication being a remote workers number one struggle.

Supervisors worry that employees will not work as hard or as efficiently, though research has indicated otherwise while employees struggle with reduced access to managerial support and communication.

Some employees feel that remote managers are out of touch with their needs and consequently are neither supportive nor helpful.

Further, new remote workers are often surprised by the added time and effort needed to receive information from coworkers - getting just an answer to a simple question can be an obstacle to a remote worker. Communication isn't as smooth or immediate and can take time to get used to

## 2. Loneliness and Isolation:

Loneliness and isolation are two of the most common complaints about remote work. Employees miss the social interaction of an office environment and working alone all day is isolating.

However, co-working spaces or working retreats could be the answer to this issue. At least for some remote workers.

### 3. Distractions at home:

Simply put, there are often more distractions at home than in a usual working environment, and these distractions are various, with some being unavoidable.

Employers should ensure that their remote workers have a dedicated workspace before switching to working remotely or hiring a new remote employee. However, there is a chance that employees will be contending with a makeshift workspace.

Even in normal circumstances, personal life demands will impinge on remote workers. In the case of working parents, there may be unexpected parenting responsibilities that arise, especially in these still somewhat uncertain times.

expect these distractions to be worse during work-from-home transitions and for those new to the world of remote working. It takes time to become accustomed to working remotely- so be patient with your employees.

### 4. Unable to Unplug:

Those who work remotely often struggle to switch off at the end of the working day, a problem exasperated by the advancements in technology in recent years. Now we are perpetually available and contactable.

Not being able to switch off and unplug leads to higher levels of work-related stress and can lead to burnout. (physical and emotional exhaustion due to prolonged stress)

### 5. Lack of Motivation:

Remote workers need to be able to keep themselves motivated and have the ability to hold themselves accountable.

Without the presence of supervisors and team members, there's less pressure to get things done which can decrease motivation. (especially with the many distractions we face at home)

Therefore to be successful as a remote worker, an individual, must rely on their own initiative to manage their time and workloads proficiently.

# How Can Employers Support Their Remote Staff?

The move to remote work can be challenging for employees and the organisations newly going remote. Employees needs are different, and there are new expectations on employers but, there are still many relatively quick and inexpensive things that employers can do to ease the transition and help their remote workforce.

Taking into account the struggles remote workers face, here are five actions that can be taken by managers and team leaders etc. to help combat these challenges:

## Provide Different Communication Options:

With the advances in technology, there are now many digital tools that help make remote working more manageable, for example, video conferencing tools like Zoom, online messaging boards - and social media - and collaborative programs like Google Docs, to name a few.

Video calls have many advantages, especially for smaller groups and can also help reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation amoung workers.

Video calls are also beneficial for delicate and sensitive conversations as it feels more personal than written communication.

There are other circumstances when quick collaboration is more valuable. In these situations, you can utilise mobile-enabled messaging platforms (such as Slack, Zoom, Microsoft Teams) which, can be used for quick, simple and less formal conversations.

*If your organisation doesn't have particular tech tools already in place, there are inexpensive ways to obtain simple or free versions of these tools for your team.

## Establish Some Communication Rules

Remote work becomes more efficient when managers set out the communication expectations (timings, frequency, platform) of their team and that employees all share the same set of expectations.

e.g. implementing the practice of having daily video check-in meetings, but using instant messenger when something is urgent."

*If you can, let your employees know the best way and time to reach you during the workday.

It also might be beneficial to keep an eye on the communication among team members (to the appropriate extent) to ensure that they are sharing information appropriately as needed.

Try to establish your rules of engagement with employees as soon as possible, ideally during onboarding or the first digital meeting.

## Establish Structured Check-ins:

Many successful remote managers establish a daily (if possible) call with their remote employees. This can take the form of a series of one-on-one calls or a team call (if the work is highly collaborative.)

The key factor is that the calls are regular and predictable. A space in which employees know they can share their concerns or ask any questions.

## Offer Encouragement and Emotional Support.

Support from the employer is vital.

Employers need to acknowledge stress, listen to their employees' worries and anxieties, and empathize with their struggles, particularly in the context of an abrupt move to remote work or for a first time remote worker.

If a new remote employee is struggling but not communicating stress or anxiety:
Ask them how they are.
Even a general question such as: 'How are you finding everything so far?' can prompt them to open up.

**Provide Opportunities for Remote Social Interaction**

Finally, one relatively simple yet essential step a manager can take to help their staff is to structure ways employees can interact while working remotely.

The easiest way to establish some social interaction is to leave time at the beginning or end of team calls for non-work conversation. (e.g. how was everyone's weekend?) Other options include virtual office parties (in which party packages can be sent in advance to employees to be opened and enjoyed simultaneously).

While these events may sound artificial and forced, remote workers have reported that virtual events did help reduce their feelings of isolation, instead of increasing the sense of community and belonging.

**Finally, remember this is new to many of us and a massive learning curb. Communication and transparency will be key.**

**Be patient with employees - whether new to the organisation or adjusting to the change to remote work - and you will soon see the many benefits of remote workers.**

**Further Resources:**

https://www.remotemission.com/remote-tools

https://www.remotemission.com/blog/3-ways-to-improve-your-hiring-process-for-remote-workers

https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/remote-work-books

To post a job on our website and newsletter fill out the form here:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScOwjrZ0ie m3G3Fkl2BTM8ixiOhUsebeUDeZywu2zI_EjU0Vg/viewform? c=0&w=1

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