



# Manager's E-guide to remote employee onboarding





# Hooray, you hired a remote new team member!

Due to globalization and the recent COVID-19 crisis, employees are asked to work remotely more and more. This sets the challenge to rethink the way of working.

Especially for new employees this might feel different. Rather than stepping into an office or workspace, your new hire may start the first day of work by logging in from home.

You should try to deliver the same onboarding experience to remote employees as you would do for employees who would go through the process physically on location.

However, your new hires will need some extra support in their onboarding than when you are meeting in person. And as a manager, you might have to do things differently.

Here are 6 tips for successfully onboarding your new hire remotely as a manager:

1. Make the first day count
2. Communication is key
3. Create a remote work process
4. Use online tools & technology
5. Keep your remote team connected
6. Trust the outcome

## Tip #1

# Make **the first day** count

You want to make sure the first day on a remote team doesn't feel lonely and disorienting for your new hire. Connect with your new hire before and at the first day on different levels, online and offline, by using these tips:

### **Use a digital onboarding tool**

...to be as transparent as possible about what your new hire can expect during the first days on the job, share practical information on how to prepare, communicate timetables, introduce team members, assign to-do's and more during the (pre)boarding phase.

### **Send a welcome package**

...to your new hire's home address with branded goodies and a written welcome note to make your new hire feel sincerely welcomed in the company.

### **Send a personalised welcome video**

...from you, the team, or the CEO, to add to this welcoming feeling.

### **Deliver the right devices and give access to software**

...to make sure your new hire is able to start working from home. Provide a keyboard, second monitor, cables and logins (or have them delivered).

### **Provide access to your team's communication tool**

...so your new hire can login on time on the first day.

### **Encourage team members**

...to send a message to welcome your new hire in the team on the first day.

### **Assign a virtual buddy**

...and schedule a virtual coffee date to introduce each other before the first day, so your new hire knows who to contact in case of questions.

### **Schedule virtual 1-on-1 meetings**

...with your new hire to e-meet you and key people in the company to start building a network. Let different people explain different aspects of the job, or different parts of important work processes.

### **Create new hire's checklist**

...with department-specific to do's and small scale responsibilities to give your new hire the feeling like they're learning and making progress on the job from the very beginning.

### **Check-in**

...with your new hire at the end of the day how the first day went with a video call.

By providing a smooth first day, you give your new hire the confirmation that they made the right choice to join your company, and a soft landing which prevents turnover from happening.



### **Appical tip: The manager toolkit**

In our onboarding platform we designed a special toolkit for managers to send a personal welcome message to your new hire, keep track of new hire progress, responses and feedback. We also included a library with tips & tricks for managers and a checklist.

## Tip #2

# Communication is key

Good and clear communication is the key to smooth onboarding, especially when working remote. Here is what you can do to keep your new hire and your team aligned, especially when you don't see each other in person.

### **Share, share, share!**

Keep information accessible by writing it down, record videos of meetings or keynotes and share it in an easily accessible platform. Make sure your team's conversations are organized and archived to make catching up easy. This way, new team members can go back and get up to date about what's transpired in your team before they began their journey at your company.

### **Check-in**

Make sure to check in every morning with your new hire. At least during the first week and a half. Ask how your new colleague is doing, and if the agenda or goals for the day are clear.

At the end of the day, do a short check-out, so your new hire knows that the shift is over. Ask how the day went and make sure to wish him/her a great evening. In doing so you connect and guide your new hire through their agenda and your organisation's work ethics.

### **When in doubt: over-communicate**

Your new hire and team have no idea what you are thinking if you don't say or explicitly communicate something. Therefore, share greater detail and context than you're used to do. If you're not sure someone understands what you mean: ask. When texting or chatting, be aware of the lack of expression or a missed question mark which can alter your perception of the tone of the message.

## Tip #3

# Use **online** tools & technology

To keep working remotely scalable and productive, use technology that is accessible for everyone, no matter where they are located. During the first week of onboarding, communicate to your new hire which tools your team uses, how to use them and to what purpose. Explain this in a video call, or provide (video)tutorials. Think about the following topics and tools:

### **Communication**

e.g. Slack, Zoom, Google Hangouts, Microsoft Teams

### **Project management**

e.g. Asana, Jira, Trello, ClubHouse

### **Calendar**

e.g. Google Calendar, Outlook Calendar, Calendly

### **Collaboration**

e.g. Google docs/slides/sheets, Microsoft Teams, Notion, Invision

### **Learning & development**

e.g. Intuo, Docebo, eloomi, TalentLMS

### **Performance management**

e.g. Intuo, Impraise

### **Pre- & onboarding**

e.g. Appical

If needed, let IT set up a secure VPN or AWS Workspace for your team to work via a secure connection. By explaining online tools and technology right away, you help your new hire get productive more quickly, boost performance and give the opportunity to contribute to the team from the very beginning.



### **Appical tip: Connect software**

Use tools that can integrate with each other. At Appical we have integrated Slack, Asana, and Google Hangouts. This way it's easy to add a task to your project or assign to a colleague, and start a video call when you want to elaborate your Slack message.

## Tip #4

# Create a **remote work process**

Once your new hire has access to the right tools, have a plan in place in which you explain the 'rules' of remote working. This way, your new hire gets a better understanding of what is expected, what the working culture looks like, and how to easily fit in.

Share these with your new hire and your team, so everyone is aligned. Below you find some examples of expectations and rules.

### **Working hours**

We start at 9:00 and end at 17:30.

### **Accessibility**

You are accessible during these working hours via Slack, email and phone and response time remains unchanged from when you would work from the office.

### **Communication**

Match your message to the right channel: our default mode of company-wide communication is email. Meetings are organised by video conference. Only use Slack if you need someone's attention right away.

### **Being away**

If you need to be offline to run an errand or are in a meeting, communicate this with your team.

### **Data & information security**

While working in a public space, don't connect to a public WiFi. Use the VPN provided by IT instead.

### **Protect your devices**

Lock your devices with a password and don't expose confidential information on your screen while working in public.

### **Video conferencing**

Be aware of your appearance (we know it's tempting, but no PJ's) and a clean workspace (which virtual colleagues or clients will see in the background).

### **Unplug from work**

It's easy to skip a break or lunch when working from home. Make sure you are taking a short break to get some movement every hour. Don't overwork yourself and stick to our working hours.

## Tip #5

# Keep your remote team **connected**

Socialization is one of the key components of a successful onboarding. At the same time, it's the number one of the most difficult parts of working remotely. To make your new hire feel like part of the team and to get to know the company culture better, consider organizing the following activities.

### **Virtual team lunch**

On your new hire's first day of work, lunch together from home via a video call. This way your new hire can get to know his/her new team members in a bit more informal way (plus free recipes!)

### **Virtual coffee dates**

To stimulate building a network, schedule virtual coffee dates for your new hire with key people in the organization. They can tell about their department, role and experience within the company so your new hire knows who are 'go-to's' if they need any assistance in their new job.

### **Virtual team building exercises**

From remote team bingo, virtual museum tours, online office games, to MTV Cribs: remote edition. There are tons of virtual team building activities you can do to bring your team closer together without being physically in the same room.

### **A recurring demonstration meeting**

Let your team members prepare a demo/show whatever they achieved in the past weeks or period. This will improve the visibility of the work everybody does and how that contributes to overall success. Besides, it stimulates creativity and can be a source of inspiration for new ideas.

Give your new hire a quick win during the first weeks of onboarding, a small assignment that is easily completed, so your new hire can contribute straight away and show the outcome during this demonstration meeting and get a taste of success.



By stimulating social connections your new hire gets used to the working environment and culture more quickly, while feeling welcome within the company. Getting to know colleagues during onboarding boosts job performance too, since new hires learn who are the right persons to contact for the right information.



**Appical tip: Virtual team drinks**

At Appical we do virtual team drinks every Friday afternoon to share company updates, achievements and what each team is working on. We also organise events regularly, like a virtual pub quiz or workout from home to keep everyone engaged while working apart.

## Tip #6

# Trust the outcome

How to know when your new hire is actually working? What if they are on Instagram all day? Performance management might look like a challenge while working remotely. Again, clear communication is key here and keeping your new hire engaged with you and the team.

### **Set crystal clear objectives and expectations for work results**

Setting the right objectives and properly communicating your expectations to your team, whether they are remote or in the office, is necessary to align employees and boost their productivity. For remote teams, these objectives often become the only way to prove good performance. So when assigning a project to your new hire, make sure you have clarified these questions:

- What is the context of this project? Give your new hire details of the project and how it fits in the bigger picture of our strategy. Show some examples of similar projects.
- What do you expect the outcome to be? What does the difference between 'good enough' and 'high quality' look like? What's your definition of 'success'?
- Who is responsible for the end result?
- Have you provided the right tools and points of contact for your new hire to succeed? More than often a project can't be completed without input from other team members. Make introductions if your new hire needs to reach out to colleagues they're not familiar with yet.
- How do you keep track of the progress of the project?
- When do you expect the objective to be finished?

If necessary, keeping track of progress using an online project management tool. If you notice your new hire is falling behind, proactively reach out to identify roadblocks and remove them in time to be able to hit targets and accomplish objectives.

### **Do regular meetings to keep your new hire engaged**

Keeping your new hire engaged is key, especially during these uncertain times. Besides daily one-on-ones, it's important to schedule regular team meetings. Use these moments to exchange feedback on how things are going, make sure priorities are aligned and discuss potential roadblocks or ideas.

### **Ask for feedback on the remote onboarding program and leadership**

Everything you pinned down for starting at the office, may work out differently while starting your new job from home.

Ask feedback to correct or improve the onboarding process for remote starters. Some examples:

- How do you feel in your new job?
- Did you have enough and sufficient resources during your first days to get up to speed?
- Did your remote team and manager help you to be successful in your role?
- Do you understand the company's mission and vision, culture, and values and how they drive the way we operate?
- Would you recommend this remote onboarding experience for future new colleagues?
- What parts of the remote onboarding experience could be improved?



### **Appical tip: Daily stand-up**

At Appical, each team does a virtual 10-minute stand-up every day at the same time in which each team member tells the main priority of the day and if they need any help to avoid roadblocks.



## To conclude

As a remote manager, try to trust your new hire and team members. Don't fall into micromanaging and surveillance. Shift your focus towards goals and output instead of clocking hours. Help your new team member to avoid pitfalls like loneliness or miscommunication by being prepared and sincerely welcome your new hire in the company while starting from home on the first day.

Work on your (over)communication skills, create clear expectations and a remote work process with the help of online tools and technology to increase your new hire's job performance.

By providing clear guidelines on how to deliver, keeping your new hire engaged during regular one-on-one's, team meetings, and asking for feedback, your new hire will be able to perform better and contribute right from the start.

These tips are not one-size-fits-all of course, so make sure you customize and personalize to see what works best for you and your organization. Include different department-specific information and tasks for each new team member starting remotely at your company, but make sure the overall onboarding experience is the same... a great one!



# Create your remote onboarding experience

Digitize and automatize your onboarding process  
with our easy-to-use platform

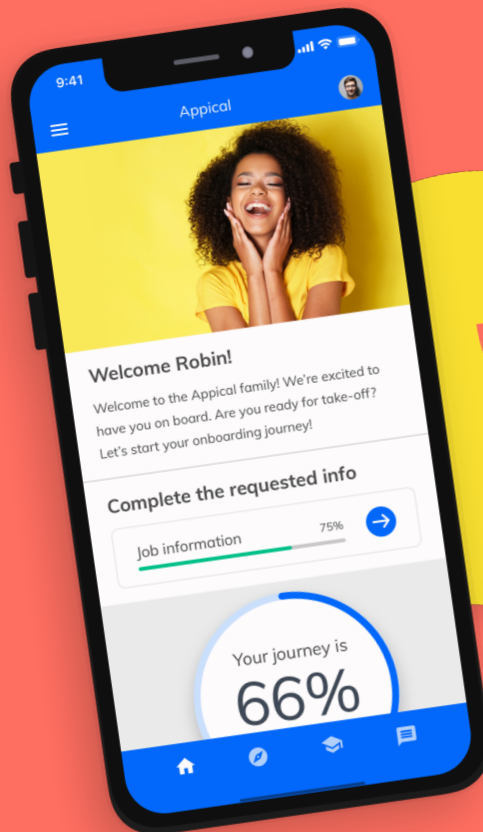
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