Hiring Will Never Be the Same

Recruiting in a post-2020 world

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The Future of Hiring

The year 2020 brought myriad challenges to the business world and every employed person across the country. The way people work and live shifted overnight. Everyone's experience was a little bit different – some were left behind while others thrived.

> "Four in 10 jobs may never return, according to a study from the University of Chicago. A reality of all recessions is that businesses fail, so furloughs and temporary layoffs can become permanent." (Marketplace.org)

For those still hiring, the challenges are abundant and include unpredictable workforce planning, budget cuts, recruiting and training remotely, and even competitive labor markets for some industries.

As the economy begins to wake back up, how organizations rebuild and manage their teams will be different. While the future is never certain, it certainly is not business as usual.

Imagine the possibilities. From creating a human connection to harnessing the infinite potential of technology, let's explore how the future of hiring is irrevocably changed for the better!

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Meaningful Candidate Selection

The contributions a new hire will make as both an individual and a teammate is mission critical. Ensuring their success starts long before their first day. Throughout the evaluation process the candidate is providing clues into their ability to perform the job and who they are as a person. Their performance in the role is a direct reflection of this process.

The cost of a bad hire is more than a drain on monetary resources. A poor fit amidst the ranks can negatively affect productivity and employee happiness across the organization – for the duration of their employment and long after their departure.

Face-to-face interviews are impractical now, and will be less common in the future as more teams turn to remote work situations. Further, with diversity and removing bias as top priorities for many organizations, the standards of candidate evaluation has evolved.

In the future, pre-screening and assessments will become more routine as companies understand the benefits and business impact of getting it right. Here's how to limit risk:

- Create objectivity in evaluating a candidate by eliminating bias and ensuring fair and informed hiring practices
- Find confidence in interviewing and hiring a new team member without ever having met them face to face
- Predict a candidate's ability to perform the job and find long-term success

Assessments

Using assessment tools to screen top applicants is a great predictor of job performance and fit. These tools can quickly identify the most qualified candidates and get to the ideal teammate faster. Pre-employment tests also help eliminate bias by using results and data to equitably compare candidates.

Whether evaluating personality, motivational or cognitive ability, pre-hire assessment tests help make informed hiring decisions and reduce risk when you can't afford a misstep.

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Culture Fit

Employees typically work with stakeholders across the organization: collaborating cross-functionally, reporting up the ladder, or managing employees. A lot of people will work alongside a new hire, so it's important that person vibes with more co-workers than just the hiring manager.

Culture fit interviews are here to stay. They're an opportunity for other team members, to get to know top candidates and for candidates to meet the team they'd be working with. Peers throughout the organization can help identify a strong fit based on their own company experience and understanding of the shoes/boots/flip-flops that need to be filled.

Reference Checks

Reference checks give an inside look at a candidate's work ethic, talents, skills, and personality. They may be considered a thing of the past, but there is renewed interest with staying power. Employers will use this tool in fresh ways to identify those who can help expand the company and excel within the organization.

Hearing from a candidate's previous manager or co-worker can be the deciding factor between top candidates, and automated resources can skip the tedious game of phone tag. Automated tools like SkillSurvey help get confidential performance evaluations and feedback on the candidate with ease.

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

One of the biggest social movements in US history emerged in 2020 with Black Lives Matter. It was a wake up call to the entire country, including talent acquisition and human resources professionals, who acknowledged they must do better to create diversity, equity, and inclusion within their organizations.

> When leaders value and support diversity across their organization, [t]heir financial returns are as much as 35 percent above their industry average. (HR Technology Conference)

Fostering a well-balanced team starts by welcoming applicants that don't look like the current team – whether that's related to skill sets, thought process, or physical appearance.

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Here's a few tips on developing diversity and inclusion in the workplace, starting at the hire:

- Rewrite job descriptions and careers page with inclusion in mind
- Leverage niche job boards
- Be objective: remove opportunities for bias and discrimination
- Give extra consideration to applicants underrepresented in your team
- Create inclusive workplace policies and benefits
- Develop a culture that not only welcomes, but celebrates, diversity

With organizations dedicating themselves to social change, businesses and employees alike will thrive, making a difference and better, more inclusive world.

Work Flexibility

This year employers' eyes have been opened to alternative work situations and employee's unique needs. As a result, the future of work will be more flexible. From work models to employee wellness, demonstrating care for the whole human will be a new norm in the work scene, and a requirement from potential candidates. Being human-first will be key in being perceived as a desirable employer, and in turn, can affect the quality of candidates to draw from in the talent pool.

Work Models

Though some organizations provided some remote work flexibility prior to COVID-19, it's a totally new experience for most office workers. Entire teams had to quickly transition: managing childcare, server access, new communication methods and more.

> "Companies shifted almost their entire office workforce to remote work as the virus spread in the US, and 73% percent of executives say it was a success." (PwC)

The transition to remote environments, driven by the pandemic, has shifted the nature of work forever. Digitization and technology have made the traditional office less necessary, opening up the opportunity for employees to work in the environment that best suits them.

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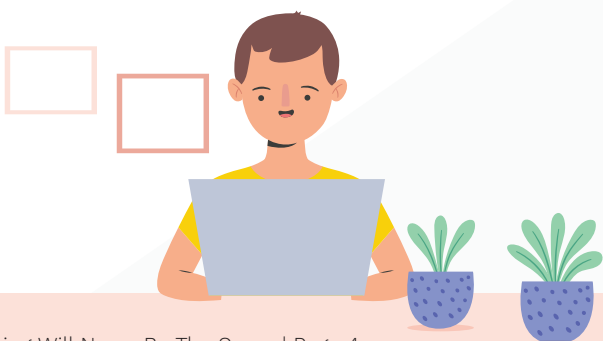
Working Remotely from Home

The line between work and home has slowly blurred over decades. However, as the whole wide world has been contracted to the household, there isn't much of a line anymore. Individuals have settled into their new situations, having created workspaces and defined boundaries as best they could.

Though working from home offers some challenges, there are benefits as well. Less commute time, more flexibility in schedules, and all the amenities and comforts of home allow people get work done when they're most focused, and improve overall employee satisfaction.

Work Remotely from Anywhere

Now that we're convinced work doesn't have to happen in an office to be successful, why limit work space to the home office (or couch)? The local coffee shop or Piazza Navona in Rome are suitable alternatives. Breaking away from the concept of the office can be incredibly stimulating and drive both creativity and productivity – desirable qualities to employers. If the work is getting done, and done well, employers may not care where employees park their laptops.

Hybrid Work Model

Though remote work has gained broad support, from leadership and the workforce alike, the office is not obsolete. People are naturally social creatures, and for many, in-person contact is valuable to them and the way they prefer to work.

> "The number one reason employees say they go into the office is to collaborate with other team members (50%)" (PwC)

When it's safe to do so, employees will take advantage of more flexible workspace options available to them, returning to the office only as needed or desired.

Workspaces Reimagined

With more people working from home than ever, and for longer bouts, both home and corporate offices will adjust to new work model standards. Office set-ups will be designed for flexibility and comfort, and, of course, safety.

Remote work set-ups that allow employees to thrive include:

- Communication tools i.e. video conferencing, messaging
- Equipment and supplies i.e. laptops, notebooks, headphones
- Access to servers and files
- Internet and security
- Tech support
- Wellness: standing desks, ergonomic chairs, etc.

As office needs shift as well, office layouts and building designs will be influenced by new working requirements. Increasingly, employees will pull up a chair rather than sit at an assigned desk and designs will feature more common spaces and shared amenities. (HBR)

Employee Benefits & Perks

Winning in the talent market will become increasingly challenging in the competition for top employees. Going forward, more employers will modernize their offering to include work flexibility, attractive company cultures, and exciting benefits. Some of the many benefits that will entice quality candidates include:

- Flexible scheduling
- Unlimited PTO
- Excellent health insurance possibly with personalization or inclusivity
- Education and development opportunities
- Wellness programs
- Paid volunteer time

Finding ways to stand out as a desirable employee with innovative solutions that benefit both employee and employer are sure to win the day.

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Employee Wellbeing

When hiring a new employee, a whole human is being welcomed to the team. Who they are during the 8 hours they dedicate to the company is affected by the other 16. More employers are understanding the importance of their health, whether mental, physical, financial, or otherwise.

There are many ways an employer can empower employees to find holistic health. These include, but are not limited to:

- Rewards programs
- Gym reimbursement or fitness incentives
- Access to software tools or consultants
- Personal coaching sessions
- Creating a culture that encourages work/life balance

> More than 75% of high-performing companies regularly measure health status as a viable component of their overall risk management strategy, according to SHRM.

The future of the human resources department will most definitely include a stronger push to support their organization's employees as whole people, so they can bring their best selves to the job.

HR Technology

Any discussion about the future must certainly include technology, and HR tech is no exception. The push towards more work happening online without paper and in-person conversation requires both hardware and software to keep pace.

Integrated systems with advanced solutions provide efficiency and productivity, along with data-driven features that automate and structure the hiring process. For talent acquisition and HR professionals, technology will play an increasingly important role in how they source, evaluate, and hire great employees.

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Applicant Tracking Systems

A cloud-based applicant tracking system (ATS) can make each step in the hiring process simple, intuitive, and effective. Gone are the days of paper resumes. An ATS can help HR professionals digitally source, assess, and hire great candidates.

Powerful and feature-rich, an applicant tracking software can streamline recruitment and talent acquisition. It facilitates posting jobs online, sorting candidates with custom tags, and automating approval workflows to quickly hire qualified candidates. As HR professionals juggle more responsibilities, the right software will allow them to rise to the challenge – saving precious resources and hiring better employees.

Video Interviews

The average cost-per-hire is $4,129, while the average time it takes to fill a given position is 42 days, according to the SHRM. Arguably the most expensive part of the hiring process is the initial screening of candidates.

Automated, asynchronous (one-way) video interviewing speeds up the screening process and provides more valuable insights into a candidate than a phone screen alone. This tool will increase in popularity amongst recruiters as they evaluate the individual beyond the resume.

Background Screenings

Pre-employment screening offers peace of mind in hiring decisions by reducing company risk and modernizing the hiring process. Running a background check on a promising applicant can uncover inaccuracies they may have reported in their work or educational history.

For those providing services residentially or commercially, safety and security for your customers is a high priority. A background check can quickly identify any unsavory characters and prevent them from becoming your next liability.

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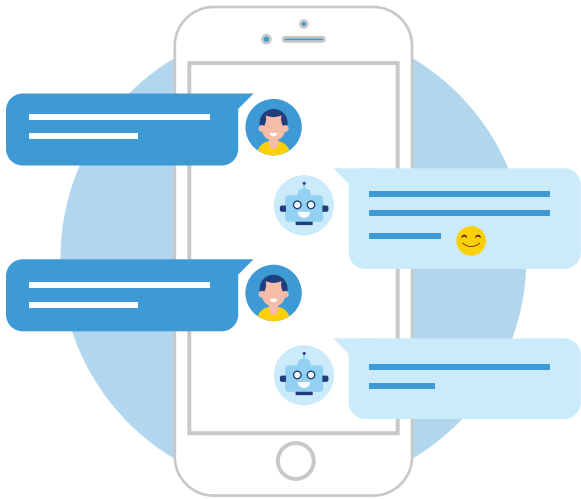
Artificial Intelligence

With Artificial Intelligence (AI) at work in the HR department, the team can automate manual tasks ranging from resume screening to chatting with applicants. As the HR role takes on more responsibility in the organization (recruitment, benefits, diversity, performance, and on and on), AI technology can significantly improve the effectiveness of the hiring workflow. While AI can't entirely take the reins, it does free up time to dedicate to the actions that require the soft skills only a human can provide.

Virtual Communication

Communicating in the digital world is here to stay. As people are no longer converging in the same place at the same time, interviews, meetings, and off-the-cuff convos are now happening online.

Many have turned to favorite conferencing (i.e. Zoom) and messaging services (i.e. Slack) to communicate and collaborate. However, more and more, recruiters and teams are finding new ways to communicate with candidates. Text-to-apply, SMS messaging, asynchronous video interviewing, and even chatbots are emerging as time-saving, easy ways to source, evaluate, schedule interviews, and otherwise communicate with candidates. As AI and technology evolves, recruiters will adopt innovative new ways to communicate in a digital environment.

Security and Compliance

The rapid and unexpected shift to remote work provided new opportunities for hackers and other bad actors to gain access to corporate and personal information. With more people working remotely than ever before, it's crucial to monitor online security. Companies will need to review and maintain best practices to keep data safe, now and always, from ever-evolving threats.

The year 2020 brought a lot of difficult challenges to overcome, but finding joy in hiring and work is obtainable. Looking to turn a new leaf in 2021? Try to embrace the evolving recruitment landscape to discover Hiring Happiness™ and live happily ever after.

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