



A guide to Virtual Onboarding
in the Life Science Industry



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A guide to virtual onboarding for the life science industry

Onboarding is a critical step in the employee lifecycle and research shows that the quality of onboarding has a major impact on the overall job satisfaction and retention of employees. According to survey research, organisations considered in the top 20% in terms of onboarding had 91% first year retention and 62% of new hires reaching their first year goals compared with the bottom 30% of organisations which reported 30% and 17% goal completion for the same timeframe.

In a world where we are increasingly having to utilise the virtual options available to us, how can businesses integrate a successful onboarding programme into the virtual world.

Office based - remote onboarding

In an office environment the challenges are infinitely less daunting than for laboratory or manufacturing environments. As with all effective onboarding programmes the focus should be on making new hires feel welcome and excited about the business in the right time frame and containing the right information to get them up and running as fast as possible. Making the switch to a virtual platform will require tweaking of usual practices and maybe even timeframes, and a good first step is to really think about what is covered in your existing set up and what purpose it serves. Once you know that the steps and processes are necessary, here are some ideas about how to translate them into the virtual world.

Length of onboarding programme

Spread your onboarding programme over a few days / weeks. This ensures that flexibility can be built into peoples' day. It can also be overwhelming to assimilate all the information quickly in a fully remote setting.

Meeting the team

Typical onsite onboarding is peppered with face to face meetings and casual greetings from team members. Think about starting your onboarding process with a live session that covers company culture, values, products and services and ending it with a live session like a Q & A on anything they want to ask about the company, who's who, where to find what etc. Pepper the week with either pre-recorded videos making them feel welcome or quick catch up video call sessions. Consider introducing a buddy system, whereby new starters have a go to person to ask anything and this ensures they have that immediate friendly face when joining, even if over video or phone. Why lead with company culture? A LinkedIn survey of over 3000 professionals found that 70% of them would leave a company if it had a bad culture and 71% said they would take a paycut for a company that shares their values and has a mission they believe in. It pays to place an emphasis on your company culture and why it is important to the business.

Get practical

A couple of the most challenging areas for people to get used to when starting a new role, are the systems and filing of a new company. Setting scavenger hunt type activities are an interactive way to get people used to navigating systems and finding the documents they need to get their role done.

Communicate and then communicate some more!

People feel vulnerable in new situations and anxiety levels can be high. Questions around whether they will make personal connections with the team, whether their knowledge will add

value and how quickly they can impress may arise in the individual. To overcome these fears, communication should cover not only the practical but also the social elements of starting a new job. Think about running an online quiz with after work drinks for example to ensure the social elements are also covered.

Tech

The technical side of virtual onboarding can often be the most challenging. Usually laptops and any other kit pertaining to the role is handed over on the first day and any configuration can then be set up to ensure a smooth transition into the role. When people are based remotely the tech needs to be sent directly to the team member and this requires extensive and slick comms with the IT team so that software can be configured correctly and in a timely manner for that individual. To ensure the smooth running of this, it could be an idea to set up an online meeting with a tech support that lasts the entirety of the download, set up and configuration as often the download stage can lead to further problems and without the onhand support this can cause frustration and delay.

Make it engaging

Interactive elements help to make virtual onboarding more effective. Technology such as Zoom allows you to create break out rooms/groups. This then enables you to create discussion environments around a main speaker session.

Other environments

During times where physical contact needs to be limited (during a global pandemic for example!) onboarding can be a more challenging experience for roles that require a person to be onsite. How do you effectively recruit and onboard where the usual processes are not possible? For some elements of the role: documentation that needs submitting, health and safety policies, company culture, intro to other parts of the business, systems and tech as well as training, the above advice would also apply.

With the use of video technology the recruitment process has been fully assimilated into the virtual world. Hinterview, Skype and Zoom are some technologies SRG has been using to help clients continue to hire.

If you need any advice on virtual onboarding please get in touch: info@srgtalent.com
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