THE RISE OF REMOTE INTERVIEWING

How to shift gears and land top talent from afar
Introduction

In light of recent events, businesses across the globe have quickly transitioned their teams to remote work. In fact, a recent study by Dynata on global consumer trends revealed that 75% of respondents are now working remotely (at least some of the time)¹.

So what does this mean for the future of recruiting? Change. And while anything new can be challenging to navigate at first, there are several advantages. For example, recruiting for remote work gives you the opportunity to reach diverse talent outside your traditional hiring area.

In fact, once restrictions are eased, many expect remote work to stay. And you may be wondering how you can get ahead of the game. In this e-book, we’ll share tips to easily shift gears and help you land top talent—anywhere you are.

Perfect the Pre-Interview

Holding interviews remotely, whether by phone or video, is not a new concept. Technologies have been in place to support virtual meet-and-greets for years, but if you’re like the vast majority of recruiters, you probably interview more in person than online. So before you make the switch from handshake to dial in, be sure you have a new plan of action.
Here’s how to set yourself up for success:

Stick to the script
One of the biggest differences between interviewing remotely and in-person is that you have less freedom to adjust and improvise on the fly. To keep things running smoothly, coordinate with your team before the interview begins, and establish a structured process with clear goals at each stage. Provide your team with direction—a list of suggested questions or even a pseudo script to open and close interviews can help ensure you’re consistently covering everything.

Reevaluate your approach
Don’t be afraid to pull inspiration from your pre-remote recruiting process and tweak it to fit your current situation. When establishing your new strategy, ask yourself the important questions, and adjust if needed.

• Is every step in the process necessary?
• Are you getting the information you need?
• Could your candidate scorecard be improved?

Own your objectives
Phone calls can often feel more casual than in-office visits and video chats may be accompanied by a whole host of other distractions. That’s why it’s important to set clear objectives for every single candidate interaction you have. Doing this will help you stay on track and assess the specific competencies required for the role.

“We’ve encouraged our interview team to take some time to develop a new strategy for success. What worked in-person may not always work remotely. It’s important for us to make those key adjustments and prep for the future of virtual interviewing.”

—Tom Odegaarden
HR Leader at ZipRecruiter
Wow Candidates From Afar

Perhaps the most challenging part of remote hiring is delivering an exceptional candidate experience. When you can no longer go out for team lunches, give office tours, or show off the company’s fancy snack selection, you have to think up new ways to wow candidates—get ready to get clever!
Here are 5 ways to make a great impression:

1. Over-communicate
It’s crucial to keep candidates informed throughout the entire hiring process. Being transparent about any new changes or delays can help you avoid confusion and deliver a solid candidate experience.

Here are details that would be helpful to share:

• The timeline of the entire interview process
• Who they will be meeting with
• Whether the job is temporarily or permanently remote
• What they can expect to discuss
• Any assignments they will need to complete before or during the interview

2. Be a valuable resource
Many candidates may be unfamiliar with video interviewing, so it’s beneficial to share tips and tools to help them in this new setting. Plus, the better prepared they feel, the better they will perform in the interview—and the better their overall experience will be.

Consider sending candidates an email before the interview with:

• A link to the video platform you’ll be using and instructions about how to download/use it
• Details about what type of equipment they’ll need (webcam, laptop, etc.)
• What environment to take the call in (a quiet space with bright lighting)

“At ZipRecruiter, we emphasize to candidates how important it is for them to act ‘as if’ they are in the office, with the same high bar for decorum. It can be easy to forget when you’re at home working at your kitchen table.”

—Suzanne Harrison
Talent Acquisition Leader at ZipRecruiter
3. Test out your technology

Nothing is worse than spending half of your allotted interview time handling a technical issue. By cutting things short, it can appear that you do not value the candidate’s time or take them seriously. While some glitches are unavoidable, being prepared with a backup plan is important. Be sure you have their phone number handy just in case.

4. Get camera-ready

Make sure that your entire recruiting team is up-to-speed on how to conduct a video interview.

- Consider running a practice session to get everyone feeling comfortable and remind them to ask for clarification if they experience any muffling or video lags.

- Also, because it is more difficult to build rapport virtually, be more intentional about showing nonverbal cues like nodding and smiling, which can be helpful in establishing trust.

5. Think outside the box

Without the ability to bring candidates onsite, you’ll need to get creative and find new ways to digitally portray your company culture. You can start by utilizing the materials you currently have available—relevant videos, event photos, or culture decks.

Then, you can organize and send out to candidates via email or share during the interview. You could even send candidates digital gift cards and encourage them to order coffee and share small talk with the hiring panel.
Post-Interview Pro Tips

You’ve done the prep work and selected top candidates—but the remote recruiting process doesn’t stop there. From doing reference checks to delivering candidate feedback, these post-interview tips will help you represent your company in a positive light.
Here are some ways you can finish off strong:

**Stay organized**
Removing the option for in-person discussion makes it even more important for the team to take detailed interview notes. Afterward, share them out and also schedule time to discuss and gather verbal feedback (as you would in the office) with each member of the interview panel. Make sure candidate scorecards are completed quickly to improve reporting accuracy and fill roles faster.

**Rely on references**
Without being able to meet the candidate face-to-face, it may be harder for you to determine if they are a great fit or not. That’s why you may want to lean more on candidate references than you have in the past. Be sure to ask highly specific questions and seek out detailed examples to help get a better sense of the candidate’s work style.

Here are some suggested questions to get you started:

- What was their role when they worked with you?
- Any specific results they were responsible for? How did they achieve them?
- Do you have any examples of how the person improved the business?
- How did they approach collaborative work?
- Would you enthusiastically hire or work with the person again?

**Offer candidates closure**
Just because someone doesn’t get the job, doesn’t mean they won’t be a great fit for another role at the company. By being transparent and notifying candidates of their status (even if they do not get the job), you establish a level of trust so you can reach out to them again down the line.

Candidates spend a lot of time and effort interviewing—notifying them about where they stand shows you understand and respect their time.
Conclusion

The global shift toward online working and recruiting presents new challenges to overcome. However, there are plenty of upsides for both candidates and employers. By making a few tweaks to your approach, you can offer a great candidate experience, reach people outside your traditional hiring area, and successfully adjust to this ‘new world’ of recruiting.
We’re Ready to Help

At ZipRecruiter, our priority is to connect people to their next great opportunity—no matter the distance. Ready to reach top talent? We’re here to help!

To learn how we can help you recruit remotely, visit:

ZipRecruiter.com/Enterprise