

# What You Need to Know When Hiring a Remote Team



Remote. It's a term you continue to hear more and more when talking about the modern workplace. Working remotely is becoming the preference of Gen Z and Millennials, especially. In fact, it's been estimated that 50% of the workforce will work remotely by 2030. Not that long ago, working remotely was unheard of. But, thanks to technology and the ease with which information can be shared, it appears to be here to stay. While there will always be a place for the corporate office, it's becoming harder to recruit quality people that are content with the nine-to-five cubicle life. If you're thinking about hiring a remote team however, there are some important things to consider.

## Make Expectations Clear

Even though some of the most talented people work remotely, it's still essential that you make expectations clear upfront. One of the most important ingredients is schedules. A major benefit for remote workers is a flexible schedule. They assume as long as they get their work done on time, they're free to do it when they like. Let's say for example that your company needs someone available from 8:00 am - 4:00 pm Eastern Standard Time. Before you set about hiring someone in the Pacific Time Zone, you'd better be sure they're alright with getting up at 5:00 am local time.

## Hire the Right People

Even though a remote worker might not ever come face-to-face with a client, they

can still have a tremendous impact on your brand and who you are. Just like any employee you hire for the office, it's important to make sure remote workers are aligned with your company's core values, mission and brand.

It's best to vet remote workers in the interview process. Ask leading questions about what they're passionate about, what their goals and ambitions are and what strengths they possess that allow them to work remotely. Of course, make sure this person has the experience and qualifications necessary to meet the demands of the job.

## **Key Performance Indicators**

Also known as KPI's, key performance indicators help companies meet goals and track progress from the top to the bottom. If you have KPI's in place already, great. They might need some tweaking for a remote position but, their intent and metrics should remain more or less the same.

If you don't have any KPI's in place, start by looking at what your goals are. What KPI's do you have in place to track your own results? How do the KPI's for the employees you manage align with accomplishing the company's goals? Asking these questions will provide you a foundation from which you can develop KPI's for a remote employee.

## **Have a Central Location**

A successful business of any size has a laundry list of different things happening at a given time. Marketing projects, sales goals, customer retention, hiring, the list goes on. If there isn't a central place where everyone can communicate, it's easy for important tasks to fall by the wayside. Whether you have employees that work remotely or not, software platforms like Monday, Asana and Trello have all the tools you need to manage each facet of every project and they're easy to use.

## **Communication Reigns Supreme**

We harp on it all the time but, there's no understating the importance of effective communication in the workplace. This is especially true for remote workers. In an office, it's easy to walk down the hall and knock on someone's door. Remote

workers don't have that luxury. That's why it's important to keep these people abreast of what's going on. Sure, everyone checks their email on a regular basis. But, being able to communicate face-to-face via programs like Skype or Zoom, allows everyone to feel engaged.

Only you can decide if hiring a remote team is the right decision. There are certainly some risks that come with not being able to physically manage someone. On the other hand, there are plenty of capable people out there that prefer to work remotely. They don't require the overhead of an office employee either. If you come to the decision that hiring remote positions is a risk worth taking, keep in mind the matters discussed. If done correctly, hiring remote workers can be a win-win for everyone.

If you are interested in growing your remote team in the [Life Sciences industries in the Bay Area](#), contact me, Jeff King, at [jking@rqfocus.com](mailto:jking@rqfocus.com) or (541) 639-3501. I am an [experienced recruiter](#) that can help you find the best remote or in-house employees for your company.

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## How-To Avoid Hiring Toxic Employees



If you're a regular reader of my articles, you know how much importance I place on hiring the right people. As I've written about previously, hiring the wrong people can prove expensive, adversely affect your bottom line and the morale of everyone in the organization. While there are plenty of ways to find those

diamonds in the rough, there are also ways to weed out potential toxic employees during the hiring or interview process as well.

## **Make Everyone Part of the Process**

If you're considering bringing someone onto to your team, there is likely no better feedback than from your team itself. For this reason, it's a great idea to get everyone together for lunch or dinner or some other fun activity outside the workplace to see how the potential hire gets along with everyone. Conversely, this opportunity gives the job candidate a chance to see how they will fit in with the culture and values of your team. This simple effort will let both parties know right away if it's going to be a good fit for everyone or not, and gives you a chance to see the person's personality outside of the somewhat artificial interview atmosphere.

## **Ask Open-Ended Questions**

Too many interviewers make the mistake of asking yes and no questions from a preset template during an interview and fail to dig deeper to find out who they are really talking to. While there is a time and place for rudimentary questions, it's also important to ask hypothetical questions like "Give me an example of how you handled (fill in the blank) situation in the past." or "What would you do if your were faced with (fill in the blank) in the future?" While most good interviewees will be able to quickly cite one example when faced with these types of questions, they may have a more difficult time providing additional anecdotes. The best ones should be able to provide multiple examples and will give you a better idea of their depth of knowledge of the topic.

If you feel like you still need more insight, consider asking some of the following questions:

- What would you most like to improve about yourself?
- What do you think your former supervisor would say about you, positive and negative?
- What do you notice is different about yourself when you're under too much stress?
- What types of people do you work best with? How about those that you

find difficult?

- Describe in detail a couple of instances where you failed in the past and how you dealt with it.

## **Pay Close Attention to Behaviors**

As you ask the questions above, you should also take into consideration behaviors like punctuality and preparedness.

- Did the candidate show up on time for the interview with their affairs in order?
- Do they readily blame others, or do they seem to accept responsibility when things don't go as planned?
- Do they speak highly of former colleagues and employers? Or do they speak poorly of them and throw them under the bus?
- While answers to questions are important to take note of, so is the way someone behaves during an interview.

## **Ask Specific Questions when Checking References**

Whether it's due to lack of time or the feeling that it's not important, most interviewers don't thoroughly vet a candidate through their references. Instead of calling references when time permits and having only a brief conversation, make the effort to schedule a few minutes when you can both talk about the potential hire in some depth.

When you get the time to chat with someone's reference, it's important to have some specific questions in mind to keep the conversation on track.

Some examples might include:

- Would you rehire this person? Why or why not?
- Did the person demonstrate emotional intelligence? Were they able to

read people properly and react accordingly?

- Describe the duties of the position the person is interviewing for and ask their reference, “Do you feel (applicant’s name) would be a good fit for this role and why?”
- Were they a team player or did they prefer to keep to themselves and worry only about their own work?
- How did they handle authority and constructive criticism?
- Is there anything else you should know about the candidate that hasn’t been discussed?
- As you’re processing the answers the reference is giving you, take note of more than just their words as you would when interviewing the candidate. Did the reference’s tone of voice convey admiration for the candidate? Or did they speak quickly and seem nervous about providing honest answers?

These subtle clues can give you valuable insight into who the candidate is as well.

## Be Respectful

It’s easy to get so wrapped up in learning about someone else and their experiences that you forget to notice your own demeanor. How’s your tone of voice? Are you actively listening and making eye contact? Or is your head buried in your notepad? If you act professionally and treat each candidate you interview with respect, you will likely receive the same in return.

Regardless of whether you’re hiring someone for a C-suite position or a janitor, taking adequate time to ask the right questions and really get to know them can make all the difference. While making the occasional bad hire is something that every manager is going to do at some point, knowing how to weed out potentially toxic candidates goes a long way in saving money, [maximizing productivity](#) and keeping company morale high. If you put into practice even a few of the ideas discussed above, you’ll be on your way to hiring only the best people for your organization.

If you are hiring someone in the [life science industries in the Bay Area](#), I can help find a great employee that fits the position. Contact me, Jeff King, at [jking@rqfocus.com](mailto:jking@rqfocus.com) or (541) 639-3501.

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## Questions to Ask Candidate's References



Never before has hiring the right person for your organization been so important. With such an emphasis on specialized skill sets and company culture, finding the perfect candidate is vital to the success of the entire company. While knowing what questions to ask and how to gauge responses during an interview is a necessary skill, there are other things you need to take into consideration as well. One facet that often goes overlooked is thoroughly vetting a candidate through their references. Sure, a person's references are most likely going to speak highly of them but if you ask the right questions, you'll glean some useful insight that you might have otherwise missed.

## What is Your Relationship to the Candidate?

If you ask this question at the outset of the conversation with a reference you gain context to process the information that is shared. Did the reference oversee the candidate in their previous job? If so, their insight might be especially valuable. Is the reference a co-worker that shared the same responsibilities? In this case, the

information you get might be a little biased one way or another.

## **Can You Verify A Candidate's Job Title and Dates of Employment?**

While this question seems like a no-brainer, it's amazing how many hiring managers fail to ask it. Even this rudimentary information can tell you a lot about a candidate. Were they in the same position with a company for a long time or do they show a history of never being in one spot for very long? Based on their job title, what were their responsibilities? Do these responsibilities align with what they would be doing in their new role with you?

## **Can You Tell Me About their Job Performance?**

It's easy for anyone applying for a job to beef up their resume with items like inflated sales numbers or claiming responsibility for managing a huge budget and large number of people. The only way to make sure the information on someone's resume is accurate is to ask. If a reference is able to verify the information, great! On the other hand, if there are gaps in the information, it's a sure sign you need to ask some tougher questions to get clarification.

## **What Are the Candidate's Strengths and Weaknesses?**

This question is worth its weight in gold. When you're considering hiring someone, you're going to want to know how they'll fit in culturally and if they have the skills needed to excel. Equally important however, is having an idea of what their weaknesses are. Weaknesses aren't a bad thing, everyone has them, but knowing what someone's shortcomings are will allow you to further deduce if they are a good fit. There's no more reliable source for this information than a previous employer who knows the candidate well, so make sure you don't let this question fall through the cracks.



# **What Was it Like to Work With the Candidate?**

When you ask a reference what it was like to spend a day working with the candidate you'll gain some critical insight into who they are as a person. Were they jovial and fun-loving? Or were they task-oriented preferring to keep to themselves? Did they get along well with others and demonstrate a willingness to work as a team? Or were they primarily concerned with fulfilling their own duties? How well did this person take direction? Were they open to new ideas and ways of doing things?

# **Why Did the Candidate Leave Their Previous Job?**

While this question can reveal red flags like someone being let go from a previous job, it also gives you an idea of how long they might stay with your company should you end up hiring them. Does this person have a tendency to jump ship thinking the grass is always greener? Or have they demonstrated loyalty in their previous posts?

# **Would You Hire This Candidate Again, and Why or Why Not?**

If you only have time to ask one question, this should be it. A reference's response to this single question can sum up everything that might be revealed in a lengthier conversation. If the reference says they would hire the individual back in a heartbeat, you've probably got a quality candidate. However, if they say no or seem unsure, you might want to do a little digging.

Hiring the wrong person for the job can be costly. A 2017 survey conducted by Career Builder found that companies lost an average of \$14,900 for each bad hire they made. While there is no way to tell for certain how a candidate will perform until they're hired, consistently hiring the wrong people can be devastating for the bottom line. If you think it's difficult to manage with the position open, just imagine how difficult it will be to manage a bad hire.

If you ask the right questions in the interview and take the extra step to ask references some poignant questions, you'll arm yourself with all the information necessary to choose the right person for the job.

As a [Regulatory and Quality recruiter](#), I can help create a list of essential questions to send to candidate's references. I help life sciences employers in the [biotech, medical, and pharmaceutical industries in the Bay Area](#). Contact me, Jeff King, at [jking@rqfocus.com](mailto:jking@rqfocus.com) or (541) 639-3501.

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## Do You Really Need Us?



**YOU DON'T NEED US** if the position(s) you have to fill are not considered critical, AND you can take whatever time is necessary for the right person to see your job posting, AND you have the time to review all submitted resumes to find the ones you want to interview. If this is the case traditional methods of recruiting may work for you.

**BUT, YOU MAY WANT TO CONSIDER US** if filling the position(s) quickly and with the right person is critical, and you need someone with the experience and understanding to do the first level screening to weed out all but the top 3-5 candidates for you, AND you are not getting much response to your current recruiting efforts. Top caliber candidates are NOT scouring job postings. They're too busy getting their work done. They also take less time to get up to speed.

# WHAT MAKES US ANY DIFFERENT OR BETTER THAN OTHER RECRUITERS?

- I worked for 4 years as an Engineer designing new medical devices, and 5 years as a Marketing Product Manager developing and launching new products to the market.
- I've spent the past 20+ years filling critical positions in the Bay area with experienced, top performing Regulatory, Clinical, and Quality professionals.
- I'm also a career counselor to several local Regulatory, Clinical, and Quality professionals and understand what they're looking for in their careers, and know how to approach them to have them consider your opportunity.
- I am a certified Facilitator for Everyday Engagement methodology for building High Performance Teams.
- I take the time to get to know the "personality" of my client companies so I can better match the personalities of the candidates for a better and longer lasting fit.

## WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US

- I will take the time to understand what problems you are trying to solve and what type of person would perform best in that role and send you the top 3-5 pre-screened candidates to consider.
- Weekly updates on the status of your search so you KNOW it's being worked on.
- I have a 74% accuracy rate on submitting candidates you want to interview.
- I have a 93% success rate on getting your offers accepted and having the candidate ready to go on day one.
- Periodic follow ups with the candidate and the hiring manager during the first year to ensure a good fit.
- A 5 year replacement policy to ensure you're happy with the outcome.

# TESTIMONIALS

*“...I know that Jeff is not in the business to make ‘a quick buck’. He is a reliable, trustworthy resource who has my best interest in mind. In my fifteen years of experience, the proof is always in the end result. Candidates represented by Jeff have gone on to become key contributors and successful team members. When staffing needs arise, Jeff King is the first person I contact.” - **J. Cook QA/RA Director***

*“...Jeff is thorough in understanding the requirements of each open position. He is considerate of my time, as well as conscientious in his follow up. He is a pleasure to work with.” - **M. Ashburn HR Manager***

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## How To Discover a Candidates “True” Personality



In the past two articles we took a look at interview questions that can help go beyond the standard interview questions. This time we take a look at breaking through a candidate's best behavior during the interview and “honeymoon” period of employment.

From early childhood we are taught to always act on our best behavior when meeting new people. As we get older we are taught to put our best foot forward whenever we are networking or interviewing. **How people act in an interview**

**can be very artificial.**

The best-case scenario is that the interview is a well-rehearsed production with a candidate who has dressed in their best suit ready to give a prepared “pitch” on their attributes and abilities. This production generally continues through the “honeymoon” period of the first six to twelve months that the candidate is in the position.

The shiny veneer usually fades at the 18-month mark, just when the candidate is fully trained and integrated into the team. How can this be avoided? Luckily the resume and interview can shed all the insight needed.

**A candidate’s true colors can be seen in a candidate’s job history.** If the candidate who has been in the workforce for 5 years or more has had five different jobs or more, there could be an issue. While this is not a tried and true means of weeding out potential issues in the future, it is definitely a talking point for the interview.

By asking the candidate about the chronic job changes, much more insight can be gained. What attracted them to the position and/or company? Why did they leave? Do they regret leaving? How did their manager rate their performance? What aspects of the job did they like and dislike?

Digging deep into the candidate’s past will not only take them away from the well-rehearsed stock interview questions, but will also cause them to hopefully be candid about their job history. It could be revealed that they are a victim of layoffs, hence the frequent job changes. Perhaps they continually apply for and accept jobs that they are overqualified for, but feel that they can make the best of.

**The most competent person may not possess good judgment.** This is especially important in industries where confidentiality is important. Whether it is client/patient information, trade secrets, or other sensitive information it is important to know that your staff is abiding by company policy and/or the law.

Gauging a candidate’s values can be achieved through interviewing. **Real life scenarios that take place in the specific workplace can expose how that candidate may react when placed in that situation.** Do they follow a manager’s instructions about honesty with a customer when it comes to a product delivery date? If a manager leaves sensitive documents accidentally out in plain

sight would they read them?

**Once the interview process is complete- ideally with the candidate meeting with the hiring manager and another leader in the organization - it is time to check references.** Candidates should be asked to provide contact information for direct managers of previous employers. These are the individuals who can shed the most insight on the candidate's past performance. Speaking to the direct supervisor 's direct report can give even greater insight and unbiased information on the candidate. The BEST question to ask a prior manager is "What is the best way to manage and/ or motivate (name)?" While previous managers may hedge on not recommending they will often answer that question candidly.

Employee attitude, not skill is usually the largest fact or in failure in the first 18 months of a position. Seeing through a candidate's best behavior during the interview process will help determine the long-term success of your new hire.

If you're losing exceptional candidates to your competition or finding that your pool of qualified candidates is drying up, then I invite you to a complimentary consultation on how to attract great talent AND keep from losing them during your interview process. Simply reply to this email to schedule a call. I promise that you will leave our call with 2-3 ideas to greatly impact your ability to find, attract, and procure the top 10-15% of the candidate pool on a consistent basis.

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## **What to Look for In a Potential Employee**



Hiring the right employee requires more than reviewing resumes. You must understand the candidate's attitude, expectations, and work habits. Hiring the wrong candidate can result in thousands of dollars wasted training and pausing the growth of your company.

Before you hire, understand the most valuable characteristics of a long-term employee. The extra time spent hiring will be an investment for your company's future productivity and growth.

## **Someone that Loves Their Career**

You may provide a great salary and superior benefits but company perks are rarely enough to make an employee change their outlook on their career. Find an employee that loves what they do. Passionate employees are often harder workers who think creatively. You can teach technical skills, you can't teach passion.

## **Someone that Is Compatible with Company Culture**

Fitting into company culture is an essential trait that cannot be trained. However, the importance of company culture can often be undervalued. A compatible employee can be easier to approach with new ideas and are generally easier to manage overall.

### **How-To Determine if Your Candidate is Compatible**

- Check if potential candidate gets along with current co-workers and boss.
- Introduce candidate to current employees.
- Ask the candidate about their values in the workplace.

## **Someone with Analytical Skills**

Every company experiences mishaps where employees are forced to think outside of formal training. For example, difficult clients, software malfunctions, and miscommunication between co-workers. When challenges arise, your employee must have analytical skills. They will better be able to solve important problems

by making logical steps.

### **Top Five Analytical Skill**

- Communication
- Creativity
- Critical Thinking
- Data Analysis
- Research

## **Someone with Long Term Potential**

Training new employees can cost your company thousands of dollars. Find an employee that is passionate about their career and company's values. A dedicated employee is an investment toward your company.

## **Someone with Ambition**

You cannot overestimate the power of an ambitious employee. It creates competition amongst employees, often increasing company revenue and productivity. During the interview, assess whether the candidate has ideas on growing their department.

Don't waste valuable time training the wrong candidate! Spending extra time hiring will have great reward for the productivity of your company.

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# **6 Reasons Why You Should Use a Recruiter**





Some people (recruiters especially) would tell you that you should use a recruiter first thing. I would say try to tap into your own network first for people you know would be good possible job candidates for the job. If you don't have success with that then you should use a recruiter. I'm not talking about your company's internal recruiter either. They are good at the more general positions, but unless they have experience specifically finding, attracting, and hiring Regulatory, Clinical and Quality professionals, their success is usually pretty limited.

When we are told we can only talk to HR about helping in a search, they almost always tell us they are finding some good job candidates on their own and don't need my help, but when we talk to the actual hiring manager they tell us a very different story. They are either seeing a lot of resumes - most of which are pretty lousy, or they are getting very few resumes and they are still not very good. Let's face it, good Regulatory, Clinical, and Quality people are hard to find no matter what the employment market is like and rarely have the time to go scouring the internet to find your opportunity.

## **WHY SHOULD YOU USE A RECRUITER?**

There are 6 reasons you may want to consider using a recruiter to fill a critical position on your team:

**Reason 1:** A good recruiter will take the time to get to know what problems you are trying to solve by filling an open position. In order for them to do their job and find the right person for you, they have to focus on the true needs you have and the requirements the successful job candidate **MUST** have to do the job. This makes the company really focus and helps them make better hiring decisions. Some of the multi-page job descriptions that contain things like "Must be able to sit at a computer for extended periods of time and occasionally lift up to 25

pounds” are pretty worthless and do not help you find or identify the right person for the job.

**Reason 2:** A good recruiter (especially if they specialize) can access a broader range of qualified and interested job candidates than you can. Only 30% of the qualified talent pool is either actively or semi-actively in job changing mode. These are the ones that respond to ads. The other 70% are busy working and not looking. But a specialized recruiter can access that other 70% to find the person you need.

**Reason 3:** A good recruiter can drastically reduce the chance of a job candidate withdrawing from contention before an offer is made. Since we establish a rapport with the job candidates we submit, we can tell you of other companies they are talking to, or offers they may be getting. We can keep in touch with the job candidates when the interviewing process breaks down so they are not left wondering what’s going on, and moving on to other opportunities.

**Reason 4:** A good recruiter can greatly increase the likelihood that your offer gets accepted, and the job candidate shows up on the first day. Since we don’t work directly for our client companies, job candidates are more willing to talk freely about what they are looking for in a job, and what concerns them about a possible opportunity. With that knowledge, and by constantly re-affirming their interest in a possible offer from you, and re-qualifying them on why this opportunity is a good fit for them, we get the people you want over 90% of the time (that’s our success rate, not for recruiters in general).

**Reason 5:** A good recruiter can greatly reduce the chance of a job candidate accepting a counter offer from their current employer - leaving you without a new hire and having to start the whole process over again. By constructing a good transition strategy including helping the job candidate navigate the resignation and exit process from their current employer, and arming them with how to handle a counter offer situation, you won’t be left with any unwelcomed surprises at the end of the process. This alone will save you a tremendous amount of time, money and frustration; because if a counter offer is accepted you not only lose that job candidate, but most likely lose any runner-up job candidates as well.

**Reason 6:** Establishing a good relationship with a recruiter offers you a few other benefits that most people don’t think about. For one, you no longer have to settle

for mediocre performance from your staff. If someone is underperforming, you can discreetly contact your recruiter and have them find a few alternative job candidates for you to replace the underperformer. The recruiter can also quickly find the right people for you when you need to add to your team because they already know your company, your team, and you. And another benefit is that you can have the right of first refusal on some of the best talent out there. Since we are talking to top performers all the time, when one decides they are ready to look for a new opportunity you can be informed of their availability before anyone else knows about them.

Our client companies are friends and partners in solving critical staffing problems. We like to know what they do, how the team works, what the company is like to work for, and how we can help them achieve their goals. We want them to know how we work, what to expect, and have confidence that we can do what we say. It's not a transactional type of relationship, but more of a partnership, and both sides benefit from it.