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# Remote Hiring

The World We Live In



Many things changed in 2020, but nothing more so than the migration from the office to working from home. Many companies, including Animate, were born in the cloud and it was just a continuation of what they are already doing. For others, however, it was a paradigm shift with the need for new technology, processes, and leadership styles.

As we stride into 2021, and on the back of all this investment will we go back to 100% working in an office – I doubt it. A post Covid survey ran by [Hoxby](#) earlier this year showed that 34% of all business leaders were now considering moving to an entirely remote office. With 42% saying they were looking to reduce their office space. I can only see this figure increasing as we adapt to the new normal.

Notably, it is not just the employers who want this change. In a survey of over 500 senior enterprise software employees Over 46% of our respondents stated that the continuation of flexible working or working from home was a major decision point when considering a new role..

But it is not just the candidates needs which have changed. The recruitment process itself and therefore what tools you have to make your decision will have to follow suit. Having spoken to a number of senior Talent Acquisition leaders in some of Europe's fastest growing software businesses it is clear that re-educating hiring managers is a priority of theirs. For some hiring managers, it has been a fairly recent shift to move beyond hiring from within their own network and utilising solely what is on a candidate's CV to meeting with candidates on potential or the softer skills and attributes. Talent Acquisition are now asking them to make decisions without ever 'meeting' the candidate. For some hiring managers this is a huge leap of faith and so incorporating the right tools and processes will make those amongst you who are uncomfortable feel a little more secure.

**So how do we  
do it?**

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# Hiring Remotely is the new normal

**So, what happens when we need to hire in the ‘New Normal’?**

Here at Animate, we have been helping enterprise software and technology businesses hire individuals to work remotely across Europe since our inception. Using that experience we now want to help you hire new employees for this brave new world. What do you need to consider in regard to their competencies, traits and skills, and how do you design and conduct an interview process to measure this and make the right decision that will help your business flourish?



Let us assume you have designed your interview process and candidate journey. If not, you can read more about that [here](#).

# What Makes A Great Remote Hire?

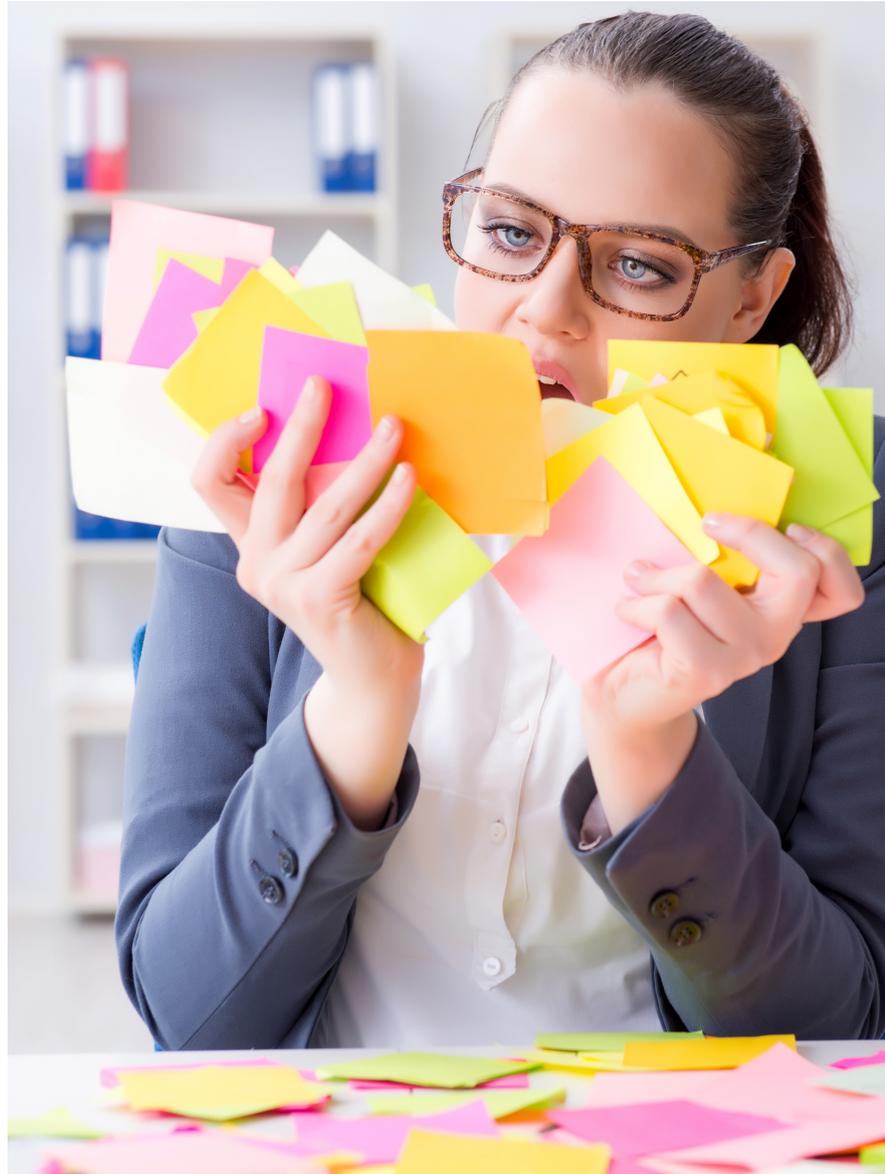
First of all, what kind of competencies should you be looking for? Finding the right person to work in a remote capacity can be a tough task. Not only do you have to ensure that the candidate is a good fit for the role (i.e. that they possess all of the relevant skills and technical abilities to do the work), but you also need to ensure that this person has the ability to be effective and productive while working independently out of a typical, regimented working environment. Sure, they might be perfectly qualified and capable of doing the job, but do they have the right qualities to do it at home?



## The ability to prioritise...

To be effective, you need to decide what tasks are important and then to focus on these. Which is why a great remote worker knows what needs to be done and delivers.

They can identify the tasks that are most important, and they're able to finish the urgent work before anything else. Therefore, an individual who can focus on the right tasks and who knows how to keep good time management will succeed at working remotely.



### Questions to ask:

- Most of our days are filled with tasks of varying importance. How do you reach the end of your day and ensure you have completed all the critical tasks?
- Tell me about a time when you delegated an important task successfully.
- Tell me about a time when you had two important deadlines. How did you balance the workload?

**Tip: Open-ended questions like “How do you approach time management?”, that require the candidate to answer based on their personal experience should help you work out if they are comfortable with managing time.**

# Good communication skills...

When you work remotely, most of the conversations and communication you have with your team will be via the likes of e-mail, Zoom and Slack. Therefore, if a candidate finds it hard to express themselves using these mediums, it's a pretty safe bet that they're not going to be able to thrive remotely.



## Questions to ask:

- How would you go about simplifying a complex issue in order to explain it to a client or colleague?
- Talk about a time when you made a point that you knew your colleagues would be resistant to. How did that work out?
- Tell me of a time when your active listening skills really paid off. Perhaps a situation when others missed a key idea or issue.

**Tip: When listening to their answers, pay attention to whether they ask clarifying questions or not - this speaks to their level of communication aptitude, that they're not afraid of being right or wrong, but rather, have the confidence to make sure they're understanding it correctly.**

# Problem Solving

Great remote workers are also great problem solvers. They have an inbuilt initiative to seek the answer to any problems they face and are comfortable doing so. That said, they also know when it's more efficient to troubleshoot on their own and when it's necessary to seek the assistance of someone else.

## Questions to ask:

- Tell me about a time when you had to step away from traditional methods to solve a difficult or complex problem. Can you describe your approach? What was the outcome?
- What is the most innovative new idea you have implemented?
- Tell me about a time when you had to analyse information and make a recommendation?
- Tell me about a time when you had to collaborate with someone to solve an issue

**Tip: Once they have answered, ask them how confident they are about their answer.**





## Dedication & Self-motivation

You could say that recruiting the dedicated and self-motivated is “the gift that keeps on giving” because self-motivation is an internal character trait that is unlikely to change. You can be safe in the knowledge that you don’t need to nudge them every day.

Questions to ask:

- If you find yourself working with a team that is not motivated, how do you keep yourself motivated and motivate others?
- At times your workload may feel unmanageable. Describe a time when you recognised that you were unable to meet multiple deadlines. What did you do about it?
- Tell me about a time when you had to deliver on a commitment that was difficult for you. What did you do to motivate yourself?

**Tip: For the most part, you want to listen for those motivational cues that tell you the job candidate is about helping others, creating something, finishing something, doing whatever it takes to succeed and making the team better.**

# Adaptability

Employees with the skills to adapt to change ultimately help companies grow. These employees stay calm under pressure and quickly come up with solutions when problems arise. This is even more important when the person is isolated.

Questions to ask:

- Tell me about a situation where you had to adjust quickly to changes over which you had no control. What was the impact of the change on you?
- Describe a situation in which your first attempt to sell an idea failed. How did you react to this? What other approaches did you try?
- Tell me about a time when your work effort didn't go as planned (blocked by obstacles). How did you resolve this issue? What was the outcome?



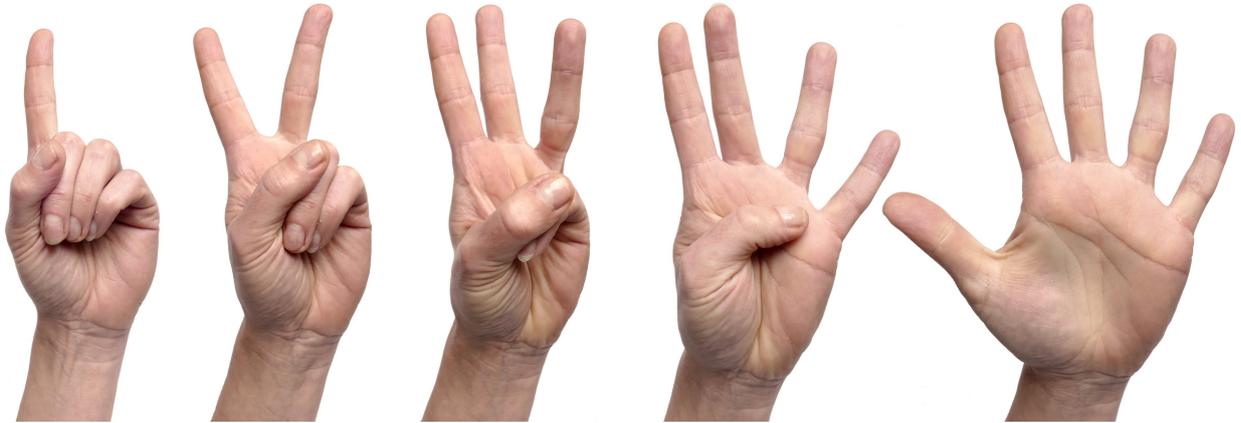
**Tip: You are not looking for outcomes here. The process, ability to change tact or differ in approach are the more important aspects of their answer.**

# The Process

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# The Process

Finally, you need a process in place to measure everyone equally. According to the Harvard Business Review, “The validity or predictive power of a typical unstructured interview is around 20%.” This means, if you are not interviewing in a structured manner, you only have a 1 in 5 chance of making a successful hire.



There are a few ways to develop a robust hiring process but the method we have found most reliable at Animate and the one we promote to our clients is the Interview Scorecard. So, what is the interview score card? The original Balanced Scorecard was developed by IT expert David Norton and Harvard Business School professor Robert Kaplan and came into circulation in 1993. The interview scorecard we utilise was developed from this and is used by HR professionals around the world.

## The Interview Scorecard

An interview scorecard can provide a quantitative basis for comparison between interviewers, enabling you to validate your perceptions with your colleagues and learn where your ratings may be outside of the norm. By correlating your predictions with candidates' actual performance on the job, you can also get quantitative feedback about your accuracy at assessing different criteria.

Interview scorecards typically include:

- The job specific competencies
- How well a candidate fits in the organisational culture
- Notes highlighting or elaborating on a candidate's responses to various questions
- Potential reasons or areas of concern
- A hire / not hire recommendation

# Competencies

Write down ratings along five or so applicable competencies (see examples of leadership competencies [here](#)). Don't have those criteria, here are a few questions to ask yourself which might help.

- What will this person have done in 12 months' time to have been successful?
- Do we need someone who is a lone wolf? Or do we need a team player?
- Do we need someone who can achieve results in a leadership position?
- Do we need to have an executive level presence with a strategic thought process?
- Who will they be interacting with and what does that mean?
- What specific KPIs do we need this person to achieve?
- What is our mission? What will they need to bring on-board?

**The key here is making sure you can tangibly cross reference the things your ideal hire needs to have with the experience of the person you're interviewing.**

INTERVIEW RUBRIC						
POSITION TITLE						
INTERVIEWER'S NAME		DATE				
Scale =	1 – Unsatisfactory	2 – Below Average	3 – Average	4 – Above Average	5 – Exceptional	
FACTORS	Candidates					Sample Questions
	James	Aliyah	Michael	Marie	Steven	
Cultural Fit	4	5	4	3	5	How would you describe your ideal organizational structure? What attributes of an institution's culture do you value?
Career Motivation	2	5	4	5	5	Why is our organization and its role attractive to you? What are your short- and long-term career goals?
Social Skills	3	4	3	4	4	Which personality traits do you value in the workplace? Are there behaviors or attitudes that you particularly like or dislike?
Teamwork	4	4	2	5	5	How do you build rapport with colleagues, direct reports and your manager? Describe the relationships you have with them.
Technical Skills	3	4	5	4	5	TBD by role.
Leadership Capabilities	5	4	3	5	4	What experience do you have in hiring and training staff? How do you maintain positivity in the workplace?
Critical Thinking / Problem Solving	4	3	5	3	5	Tell me about a time when you identified a problem and describe your role in the solution.
Self-Awareness	4	2	4	5	5	Describe your strengths and how you leverage them. Describe your weaknesses and how you improve upon them. How would your colleagues describe you?
<b>AVERAGE SCORE</b>	<b>3.625</b>	<b>3.875</b>	<b>3.750</b>	<b>4.250</b>	<b>4.750</b>	

Once you've got your scorecard, the rest is fairly simple. For an interview, rank each competency on a scale of 1-10 and calculate the average, determine your realistic threshold for a minimum acceptable score, and boom! You've got a clear cut, non-emotional evaluation that you can easily compare to others who are interviewing too.

# The Dos & Don'ts

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# Dos

- Be very specific about what success and failure looks like. It is essential that you do this well if you want your scorecard to give you meaningful results.
- Make sure everyone in the interview process uses the same scorecard and that the results are discussed in detail. If people are measuring or interpreting competencies differently, it will cause havoc.
- Refine your scorecard regularly to make sure it's up to date and accurate. It's important to not think of a scorecard as a onetime thing. if you want to get the most out of it, you will want to review it over time.



# Don'ts

- Don't forget to tally your results and store the data to compare against the performance of your team over time. This is how you know which things most closely correlate to your team's success.
- Don't change your scorecard while you're filling a particular position or too frequently. You'll want to do the updates before you start the interview process and keep it consistent throughout.
- Don't change too many things on your scorecard at once. If you change too many variables in one go, it's hard to know what made the difference.
- Don't fill in the scorecard as you go. It will limit the eye contact and engagement in the interview (especially on video interviews) and you will fail to properly engage and connect with candidates. Remember that this is a two-way process. One way to help prevent this is to wait until the end of an interview to fill out the scorecard.

(Tip: Most video conference facilities have a record function. As long as you inform the interviewee this is a great way to build rapport and capture all the information.)

- Don't stick with the questions on the scorecard only, by doing so you can restrict the interview. Leave room for exploration, as all hiring managers know, thorough interviews are somewhat organic. The scorecard will give you a great structure to follow but don't be afraid to go off topic to dig into certain aspects of the conversation.



In our next paper we will be talking to Talent Leaders around Europe on topics such as remote onboarding, managing remotely and building a world-class remote culture.

If you are remote hiring for the first time, hopefully this will give you a few ideas in how to build a process which works for you. However, if you would like a little more guidance, feel free to get in touch with us here at [Animate](#). Alternatively, if you have any comments on the content, we would love to hear from you too.

# About Animate Search

Animate are an Executive Search firm operating in the EMEA Enterprise Software and Technology industries. With offices in Manchester and Barcelona, they guide companies who are fighting for competitive edge. WeThey provide that edge by ensuring their customers can attract the very best in leadership and commercial talent to devise strategy, build sales pipeline and deliver world class services.

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