Virgin pulse

Tip sheet

4 tips for making remote onboarding more inclusive

Starting a new job comes with a mix of emotions. Optimism, apprehension, and general nervousness – and that is without everything else dominating the headlines. First impressions are everything. Those crucial moments come in onboarding new hires, which is now entirely remote for many organizations. If your company has made diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) a priority moving forward, it is also a natural place to start. So how do you make your remote onboarding process feel more inclusive?

1

Prepare for an inclusive experience before their first day

Asking employees, 'What do you need from us to assist you to do your job?' is a great way to ensure every new hire is prepared for day one. Some of the most challenging barriers to creating inclusive environments are those we cannot see-through Zoom. Taking time to help a new set up live captions ahead of the first onboarding session, ensuring delivery of a headset or desk setups, or planning break schedules to accommodate religious practices or childcare, and more all go into making an inclusive environment. See how to use your wellbeing to jump-start day one.

2

Ask for their preferred name and pronouns *and then use them*

Preferred names and pronouns are one the easiest and, admittedly, one of the hardest ways to promote equity, belonging, and inclusion across the organization. Simple questions to ask, however in practice, most people don't ask everyone their preferred name or pronouns – only asking a minority of employees. This unintentional approach can be marginalizing and insulting, especially when an individual is singled out to ask for their preferred name or pronouns.

Start your new employee relationship with a sense of belonging by sharing how you structure your emails, virtual meeting platforms, badges, and other forms of identification. Do not assume how someone wants to be represented. Make a conscious effort to demonstrate neutral language during onboarding when referring to team and families to ensure all team members feel acknowledged, safe, and included.

3

Help them speak your language

Every organization has its unique company language – acronyms, specific terms, formal norms, and <u>events.</u> As a new hire, you are unaware of these situations until you come across one, so helping expose employees to your language and norms and preparing them for their first six months navigating the organization helps to break down unintentional silos. It's essential to help all new hires feel like they're speaking the same language and have the exact expectations as their peers, and for it to feel safe to ask questions to learn concepts thoroughly.
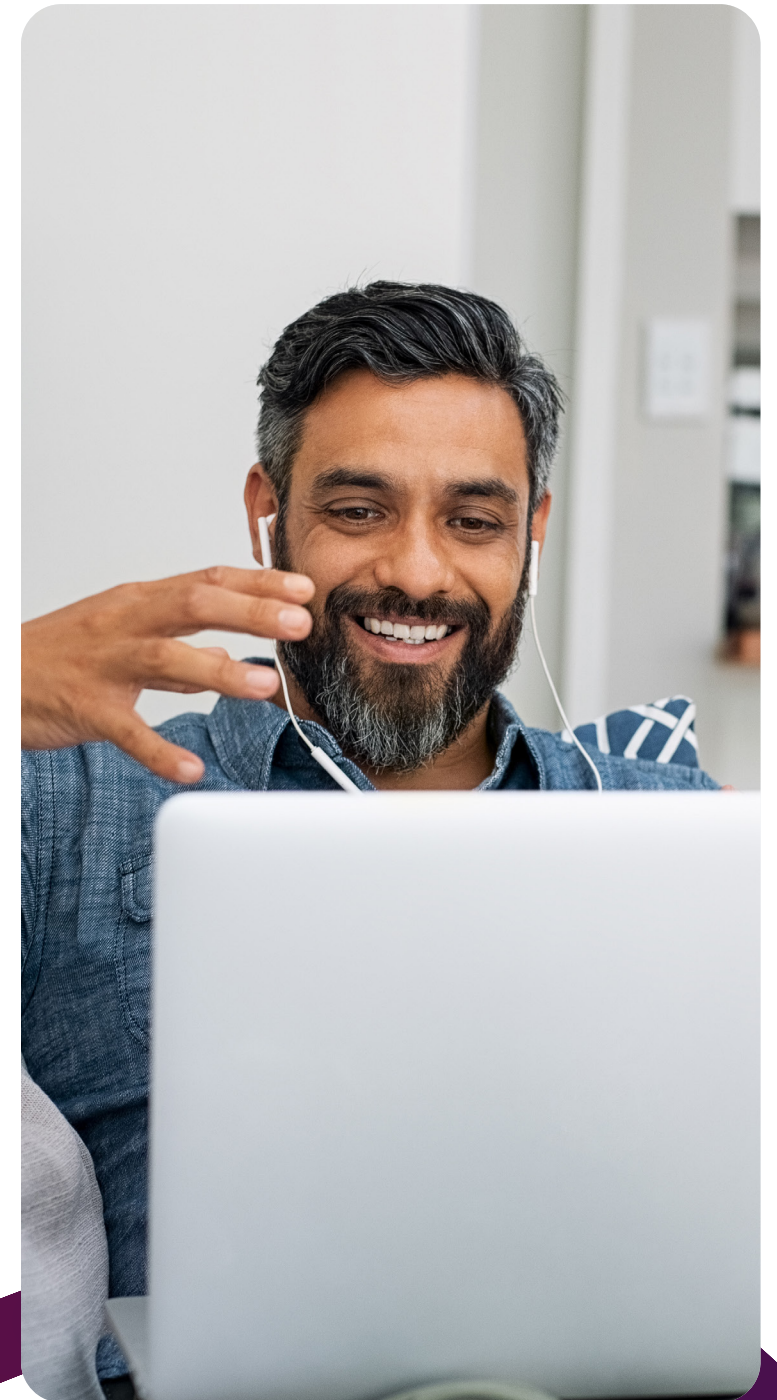
4

Have a diverse group greet your new hires and help them build relationships

According to a <u>two-year study</u> by Stanford professor Nicholas Bloom, loneliness and isolation are the most significant reported concerns among remote workers. New hires are isolated in their homes, connected by screens and Slack, without the day-to-day social interactions of office life.

Our role models are predominantly drawn from the workplace as we reach adult life. Without regular face-to-face interactions, these workers struggle to figure out company culture and where they fit in, making them feel invisible and anxious about doing what they were hired to do. For Gen Z and caregivers, this is particularly difficult. A robust wellbeing program that offers connection points can help all employees feel like they belong and give them tools to support their own needs.

Starting onboarding with a diverse group of individuals, not just departments begin a crucial step in delivering a message to new hires. Many organizations start onboarding by creating clear pathways to help employees connect quickly to employee resources groups (ERGs), instantly signaling a place of belonging. Other organizations set up virtual meetings with various peers to begin the transition and connection process. Asking for feedback during and after the onboarding also has demonstrable impacts on building more inclusive onboarding practices and retaining talent.

Source: <u>Forbes</u>

Need more ideas to embed DEI into your organization?

In this toolkit, we provide resources and practical ideas to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace and beyond.

Download Toolkit

Remote Onboarding Checklist

Leveraging an inclusive wellbeing program during onboarding and beyond helps employees feel cared for, safe and connected to your organization.

✓ Integrate wellbeing into day one

Add a wellbeing onboarding session, showing the depth and breadth of your commitment to physical, mental, social and community wellbeing

✓ Help employees connect with their peers

Leverage connection points in your wellbeing program for immediate belonging

✓ Keep a calendar of events

Each organization has its own internal events calendar, bring these connection points forward during your onboarding and ensure they are front and center

✓ Start a new hire challenge

Demonstrate your commitment to health with a physical or healthy habit challenge new hires and their peers

✓ Show employees a social health commitment

Help employees bring their friends and family into your wellbeing program, instantly boosting feelings of inclusion and support

✓ Explain how to access benefits

Go beyond the insurance paperwork by showing employees how to access your total rewards including mental health, family planning, coaching, nutrition, and more

✓ Talk about healthy habits

Health can feel taboo in the workplace, and remote working makes this even more difficult to discuss. Show employees how they can use your wellbeing program to form small healthy habits from smoking cessation to stress reduction .

About Virgin Pulse

Virgin Pulse is the leading digital-first health and wellbeing company that empowers organizations across the globe to activate populations, improve health outcomes, and reduce spend in an era of accelerating cost and complexity. Virgin Pulse's Homebase for Health® connects data, people and technology to deliver high tech, human touch experiences that engage and reward individual journeys. Virgin Pulse impacts over 100 million people across 190 countries by helping Fortune 500, national health plans and many other organizations change lives – and businesses – for good. For more tips and insights, connect with us on Twitter or LinkedIn.

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