Highlights from the Geekdom Remote Onboarding Webinar, May 15, 2020
Speaker: Iris Gonzalez, founder of StartupsSanAntonio.com

You can read our article based on best practices from businesses across San Antonio for onboarding interns and new hires without face-to-face contact.

I included more information beyond what was in the article for this webinar, which you can watch on Geekdom's Facebook page. Here's a detailed outline of what I covered, plus a checklist for remote onboarding.

1. **You'll need to define and document your onboarding practices**

With everyone working from home, you need to document the details of your organization's onboarding experience. It helps make the process repeatable.

2. **Don't just think onboarding; include the full spectrum of what it takes to bring someone new into your organization.** Include recruiting, posting the job announcement to the employee's first day on the job," and training. "We set up meetings for the new hire's first day, and the employee gets an onboarding timeline with milestones to complete."

The remote onboarding timeline ideally includes: human resources in-processing, discussions with the hiring manager, getting set up with technology and tools, and learning about the new role and employer expectations.

CONSISTENCY=This makes for an excellent experience from the employee/intern's POV.

3. **Recruiting is remote, too**. Recruiting has changed dramatically over past couple of months. Changes not temporary – probably continue to evolve and become permanent after this is over.
    a. **Be prepared to**:
        i. Engage more with people virtually, more phone and digital comes, more video calls to build trust. Read body language, as uncomfortable as that may be. Present yourself and your video background accordingly. People will read backgrounds—@ratemyroom on Twitter.
        ii. Stay current on your industry
        iii. Despite unemployment #s, you'll still competing for the top hires in tech, for example, so need to move faster on hiring decision.

4. **Remote training.** In-person training or shadowing is also transitioning to online platforms. All recruiting has become virtual, even local hires.

"Now I pull up a spreadsheet and record the Zoom call to show how it's done so that the person can refer to the recording later. Then, in the second half of our call, I can watch them as they try to do it and offer feedback in real-time."

5. **Let's talk about interns**:
    a. **Narrow the scope and job description for interns**. Interns will instead receive assignments they can complete independently and check-in with a manager daily and weekly instead of working with a dedicated team of people in the office.
    b. **Create smaller chunks of training rather than one big one.** Schedule daily video calls over the first two weeks until the interns know enough to do the work.
    c. **Provide clear guidance and expectations**. Interns may be unclear on what to do with their downtime, given their lack of experience in a work environment.

- Applies to New hires, too. Ask what they hope to gain from this job opportunity: "Sometimes, you can be learning and not necessarily working," = better engagement, retention

6. **Transition company culture to the virtual world**
    a. No more meet and greets; Welcome them on the Slack channel and remind the hiring manager to email the entire company to introduce the new hire.
    b. "We've given each team member $20 to buy food from a local business so we can share a team meal on Zoom, it helps keep our culture going," Piña said.
    c. Piña also manages 'swag from a distance' by shipping new hires and customers t-shirts and hats along with a thank you note.
    d. Online content more important! Dust off your company blog

7. **Use online tools for productivity: Slack,** MixMax, Yac, Kahoot—see list of free tools and resources here.
    a. New members of your company should know how to ask a quick question virtually
    b. New team members need access to company email, Slack channels, and the software tools and platforms your business uses if they are going to be productive.
8. **After the pandemic consider keeping some remote processes**
    a. Detailed playbook that documents processes
    b. Next normal vice the new normal

Remote Employee Onboarding Checklist

1. Send new employees links to company culture articles, videos, and links to order swag. If you'll be providing any hardware, make sure you are prepared for it to arrive in time so your employee can be ready for orientation.

2. Schedule an individual or group orientation via video conferencing call and review your company mission and values. Provide a meeting agenda ahead of time and send a digital copy of your employee handbook and any onboarding documentation they may need.

3. Assign your new employee a mentor/orientation buddy or hiring manager and have them set up a time for a video call.

3. Give new employees time to review videos, documents, internal wiki, etc.

4. Schedule a human resources orientation. This is where your new employees can digitally sign any HR documents, learn about benefits, and set up any accounts they may need access to.

5. Host a communication orientation with IT where new hires are given tools, passwords, are added to relevant Slack or messaging groups, email access, and open time to help get acquainted with any new software they'll be using.

6. Intro new hire/intern to team; Set up video coffee chats or use Donut, a Slack app.

7. Hold a team orientation and provide new teammates with links to all team documents, an organization chart, relevant contact information, team calendars, and anything else your team uses on a daily basis.

8. Have a product, sales, or service rep (or all three!) review what exactly it is that your company does or sells in a product/service orientation. Make sure to leave time for new employees to ask questions about the inner workings of your service, pricing, and the history of your product.

9. Encourage feedback throughout the onboarding process. Your remote employees can tell you exactly where you can improve for your next group of new hires.

10. Create an individual 30/60/90 day onboarding plan with video check-ins and goals.

11. Conduct role-specific training. Make sure your new hire has the contact information and a video meeting with anyone they'll be working with or interacting with regularly

during the onboarding process. Provide training and any necessary certifications for anyone new to the field or position.