

EMPLOYER TEMPLATE

The 90-Day *Remote Onboarding Plan*

Remote hires who leave in the first six months almost always describe the same first week: a laptop, a login, and silence. This plan replaces the silence with a schedule.

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What is different about onboarding remotely

In an office, onboarding happens by osmosis: the new person overhears how things work, asks the desk next door, and is noticed when they look lost. Remotely, none of that happens unless someone makes it happen. The new hire cannot tell the difference between "everyone is busy" and "nobody remembers I started", and by week three they have decided which.

For a hire who has also just moved country for the role, the first weeks are doubly loaded: registration appointments, a bank that does not exist yet, a flat that is temporary. The plan below has a lane for that, because a sponsored hire who is drowning in admin is not learning the job, and it is your admin as much as theirs.

THREE RULES

Nothing is discovered. Everything the person needs to know in week one is written down and sent before day one.

Someone is responsible for every day. The calendar shows who the new hire is talking to and when.

Goals are written at 30, 60 and 90 days. Both sides know what "working out" means.

01 Before day one

Two weeks out. The new hire should receive a plan, not a login.

Two weeks before

- ☐ Contract signed; employment type, location terms, overlap hours and any travel confirmed in writing
- ☐ Equipment ordered to the address they will actually be at (a hotel, if relocating)
- ☐ Accounts created; access requests filed; password manager invite ready
- ☐ Buddy assigned and briefed (section 4)
- ☐ Week-one calendar built and shared, in the new hire's timezone
- ☐ The welcome note sent: who they will meet, what the first day looks like, what to have ready

If they are relocating

- ☐ Arrival date, temporary housing and pick-up confirmed
- ☐ Day-one is at least two working days after arrival
- ☐ Registration, bank and tax-ID appointments booked, with the documents listed
- ☐ First-week calendar has admin blocks in it, not just meetings
- ☐ A local colleague or relocation agency named as the person to call
- ☐ Payroll knows the bank account may arrive after the first cut-off, and has a plan

The welcome note (send it seven days out)

TEMPLATE

"Hi [name], we are looking forward to [date]. Here is what the first day looks like: at [time, their zone] you will meet [manager] for an hour; at [time] [buddy] will walk you through the tools; the afternoon is yours for setup and reading, and there is a written guide at [link]. The laptop should arrive [date]; if it has not, tell [person]. You do not need to prepare anything. Your first-week calendar is attached; every meeting has a note on what it is for. If anything about the timing does not work for your day, say so and we will move it."

02 Day one and week one

Scripted, in the new hire's timezone. Adjust the hours; keep the shape.

DAY	MORNING (THEIR TIME)	AFTERNOON	OWNER
1	Manager: welcome, the team, the role in one page, the 30-day goal. 60 min.	Buddy: tools walkthrough, where things live, how to ask. 60 min. Then setup and reading.	Manager, buddy
2	Team: meet each person for 20 minutes, with a written prompt each ("what do you wish you had known in week one").	Read the last three decisions the team made, where they are recorded. Write down three questions.	Buddy schedules
3	Manager: answer the questions; the first small task, with a definition of done.	Do it. Ship something tiny by end of day, even a doc fix.	Manager
4	Shadow: sit in on the team's normal work (a review, a customer call, a stand-up).	Continue the task; write the first hand-off note (the Working Async Handbook has the shape).	Buddy
5	Manager: week-one check-in. What was confusing, what was missing, what they want more of.	Written week-one summary from the new hire: what I learned, what I did, what I need.	Manager

SHIP ON DAY THREE

A first task small enough to finish in a day, that goes somewhere real, does more for a remote hire's confidence than a week of reading. Choose it before they start.

03 The 30-60-90 goals sheet

Written together in week one. Reviewed at each milestone. Both sides sign.

New hire _____ Role _____ Start date _____

Manager _____ Buddy _____ Timezone / overlap _____

By day 30: learning

Knows the product, the team, the tools and the way decisions are made. Has shipped small things. Can describe a normal week.

GOAL	HOW WE WILL KNOW	MET
		☐
		☐
		☐

By day 60: contributing

Owns a piece of work end to end. Hand-offs are clean. Asks the right people the right questions, in writing.

GOAL	HOW WE WILL KNOW	MET
		☐
		☐
		☐

By day 90: performing

Delivers at the level the role was hired for, with the autonomy remote work needs. Has made a decision alone that turned out well.

GOAL	HOW WE WILL KNOW	MET
		☐
		☐
		☐

04

The buddy and the manager

Two roles, deliberately separate. The buddy is for the questions people do not ask managers.

The buddy

- A peer, not a manager; ideally in a nearby timezone.
- Available on chat through week one; a 20-minute call three times in week one, weekly after.
- Owns: tools, norms, "how do I", "who do I ask", the unwritten rules.
- Not responsible for the hire's performance, and told so.
- Gets an hour a week back in their calendar for it, explicitly.

The manager

- Owns: the goals, the first task, the feedback, the decisions about the role.
- A 30-minute 1:1 every week for the first 90 days, at an hour that is sane for both.
- Reads the hire's weekly summary before the 1:1 and responds to it in writing.
- Tells the hire, at 30 and 60 days, plainly, whether it is working.
- Removes blockers the hire cannot see (access, introductions, a stuck decision).

Buddy briefing

Buddy _____ New hire _____

WHAT THIS PERSON NEEDS MOST FROM YOU IN WEEK ONE (FROM THE MANAGER)

THE THREE THINGS ABOUT HOW WE WORK THAT NOBODY WRITES DOWN

05

Check-in cadence across timezones

CADENCE	WHAT	TIMEZONE RULE
Daily, weeks 1-2	A written "how is it going" from the buddy; a reply within the hire's day	Async. Sent at the start of the hire's day, not the buddy's.
Weekly, days 1-90	Manager 1:1, 30 min, with the hire's written summary as the agenda	Inside the overlap window; alternate who takes the awkward hour if there is no good one.
Weekly	Team ritual the hire can attend live (stand-up, demo, review)	If the hire cannot attend live, it is recorded and they are asked for written input.
Day 30, 60	Milestone review against the goals sheet, 45 min	Live, camera on, in the overlap.
Day 90	The review (section 6)	Live.

THE FAILURE MODE

The hire is in a timezone with two hours of overlap; the manager fills those two hours with meetings the hire is not in; the 1:1 is the first thing dropped when a week gets busy. By week six the hire has not had a real conversation with their manager in a month. Protect the 1:1 as if it were a customer call.

WEEK	1:1 HELD	SUMMARY RECEIVED	BUDDY CHECK-IN	BLOCKERS RAISED / CLEARED	NOTES
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					

06 The 90-day review

Honest both ways. The hire reviews the onboarding; the manager reviews the hire.

Manager on hire

AREA	1-4
Met the 90-day goals	
Works independently; makes work visible	
Writes clearly; hand-offs are clean	
Collaborates across the timezone gap	
Reliability: present when said, honest when not	
Role skills at the level hired for	

Decision: ☐ Confirmed ☐ Extended probation ☐ Not continuing

Hire on onboarding

AREA	1-4
I knew what to do in week one	
Equipment and access were ready	
My buddy was useful	
My manager was available at sane hours	
The goals were clear and fair	
If relocating: the admin support was enough	

WHAT WE SHOULD CHANGE FOR THE NEXT HIRE

AGREED NEXT 90 DAYS

Manager signature / date

New hire signature / date

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- The Remote Interview Scorecard Kit
- Paying People Across Borders
- The Distributed Team Operating Manual
- The Visa Sponsorship Employer Checklist
- The Working Async Handbook (for the new hire)

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