



# Building a Remote Marketing Team

## REMOTE WORK IS ON THE RISE

According to labor market economist Dr. Adam Ozimek's Future Workforce Report, **36.2 million Americans are set to be remote by 2025.** That number is nearly double compared to pre-pandemic numbers.

The sudden shift to remote work at the beginning of the pandemic was a challenge for almost everyone. Businesses were suddenly faced with significant gaps in their work and communication processes while trying to keep their company afloat, and employees were faced with a new normal of working in an unfamiliar structure.

While there were challenges with the transition to a remote work environment, it also provided benefits for both businesses and their employees. Many businesses found new efficiency and reduced overhead, while their employees found a new balance between their work and personal lives.

Today, these businesses face unique dilemmas: employees don't want to return to the office, and many business leaders are focused on accommodating this by building a sustainable remote team structure. This is uniquely true of marketing departments since many activities were executed remotely through agencies or freelancers even before the pandemic.

Many marketing leaders are working overtime to create a structure that will work effectively for remote or hybrid teams and feel immense pressure to make it happen quickly. More and more leadership want their employees to find a way to create remote teams while also maintaining the work procedures that enable them to meet their goals prior to the pandemic.

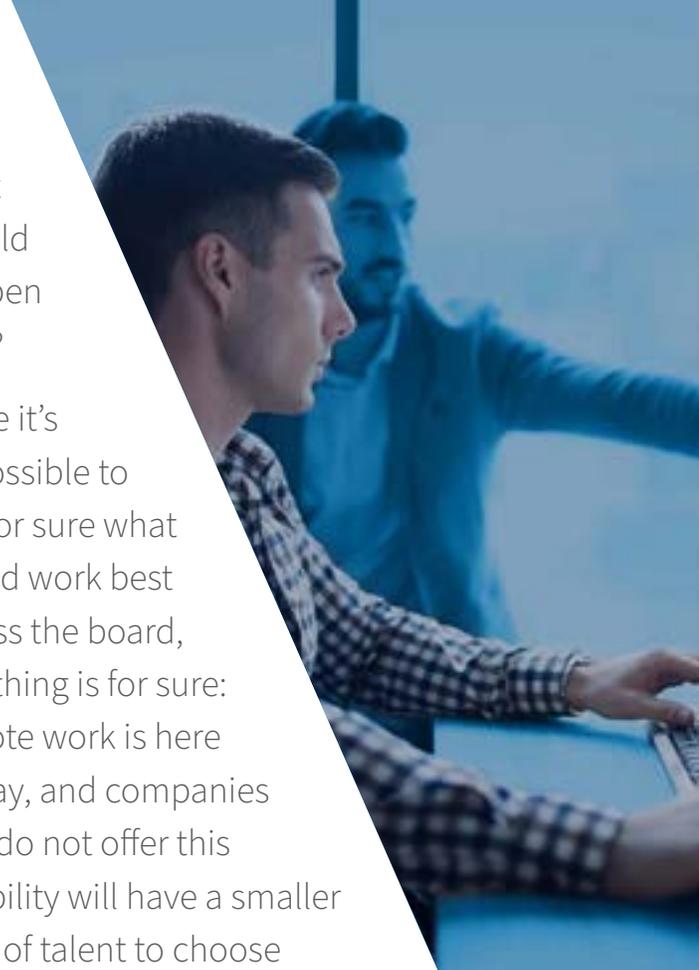
With business leadership wanting to replicate their in-office structure remotely, and employees wanting to create a structure with more autonomy,

what should happen next?

While it's impossible to say for sure what would work best across the board, one thing is for sure: remote work is here to stay, and companies that do not offer this flexibility will have a smaller pool of talent to choose from.

That doesn't have to be you. Your marketing team can achieve your business goals while also giving employees the remote structure that they desire. This doesn't mean that shifting to remote teams won't come with some challenges.

To help you identify the best path forward as you build a remote marketing team, we'll explore the common challenges faced by marketing leadership when building a remote marketing department as well as the best practices that have been used to solve these challenges.



# THE VALUE OF A CROSS-FUNCTIONAL TEAM

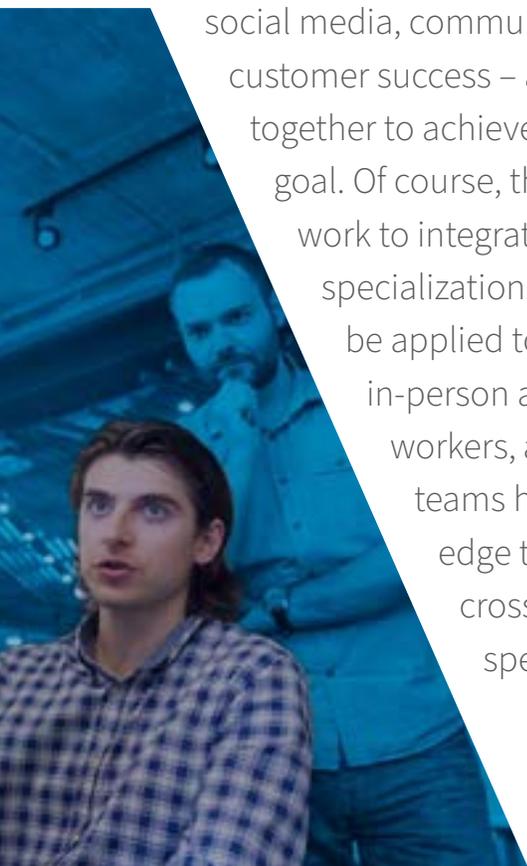
**A cross-functional team is a group of people who have different functional experiences and specialized skills all working towards a common set of goals. These individuals pool their expertise, knowledge, and resources together and work as a succinct unit.**

When you incorporate cross-functional specialization, you have people from different functional areas of expertise – such as website development, social media, communications, and customer success – all working together to achieve a common goal. Of course, this doesn't only work to integrate different specializations, but it can also be applied to integrating in-person and remote workers, although remote teams have a unique edge to honing in on cross-functional specialization.

Specialization has been steadily growing as an effective brand marketing strategy over the years. It can help generate more leads, strengthen brand impact, build customer loyalty, and close more sales. And with the rise in online communication, it's grown even more important.

Specialization is a uniquely modern challenge for businesses. Rewind twenty or thirty years ago, and you'll see that marketing, as a whole, was much simpler back then and required far less diversity in specialization. Back then, you had maybe two or three generalists on a marketing team successfully handling the company's marketing needs, but that is simply not the case in today's modern business environment.

Specialization means putting the right people in the right spot based on their skills and experiences. For example, a designer would not do well writing content because their skills are in visual design, not in how to craft beautiful stories. On the other hand, writers would not do well being involved in strategizing because they don't have the necessary skills and experience to form structures and strategies, but rather how to make those strategies come to life.



This is why cross-functional specialization is so important. Picture it like this: you're trying to fit all of your luggage in a car before vacation. You can either throw everything in and hope that it fits and stays somewhat organized, or you can take some time to organize and find the right spot for each piece. The latter approach ensures you will achieve your goal of fitting everything into your suitcase.

The same goes for creating marketing teams.

Incorporating cross-specialization can make your team even stronger. Hiring the specific skills needed to create an all-encompassing marketing team will take your marketing goals and successes to new heights.

Don't get stuck in the past when marketing teams hired a handful of generalists and called it good. Instead, step into the modern business world and begin prioritizing cross-specialization for your team.

## THE HIDDEN VALUE OF MANAGING SPECIALISTS

**While the value of cross-functional specialization has an obvious impact on the quality and efficiency of work executed, there are also a number of peripheral benefits.**

### **Increases Employee Satisfaction**

Human nature craves connection, appreciation, and success. When individuals across a team can work together succinctly and efficiently, their mood improves.

Without cross-functional specialization, you have a group of individuals working individually rather than together, which can cause feelings of isolation, confusion, and frustration.

### **Diversifies Knowledge**

Another benefit of cross-functional specialization is the diversity of knowledge and experience brought into every project. Different projects are viewed from multiple perspectives, rather than just one, which naturally means problems can be solved more rapidly and with greater ingenuity.

Beyond that, more perspectives are shared, which can be brought back to different specializations and create the potential for improvement outside the project itself, both for the individuals and the company.

## **Builds Autonomy**

Unlike traditional functional teams from a single department or background, cross-functional specialization offers greater efficiency for project completion. Because you have more experts working together, there is less need for clearance or clarification from other departments because people are representing those departments already within the group.

That means faster resolutions, completions, implementations, and successes of projects.

## **Improves Team Collaboration**

[78 percent](#) of remote employees say they are highly engaged, followed by only 72 percent of on-site employees.

A [research study by Zippia](#) found that companies that promote collaboration and communication have been linked to reducing employee turnover rates by 50% and that more than 50% of workers in the United States say their jobs are reliant on collaboration. That's pretty significant.

Every remote team member has different skills, expertise, talent, and backgrounds. When these team members collaborate and combine their unique perspectives, productivity is fast-tracked, problems are solved more efficiently, and strengths are made even stronger.

Team collaboration helps generate a broader, more in-depth circle of knowledge that allows each team member to understand their role better and take more ownership of it.

In-house cross-functional specialization contrasts with the typical marketing department structure, which is often composed of multiple fragmented freelancers or agencies working in silos on specialized activities. These vendor relationships are often managed and coordinated by in-house marketing leadership.

## WHY BUILDING A CROSS-FUNCTIONAL TEAM IS CHALLENGING

**While it would be ideal to structure every marketing department as an in-house cross-functional team, this is impractical due to the many unique areas of specialization and the inconsistent nature of the need for specialization.**

For example, while you may execute email marketing campaigns, website design updates, ad campaigns, or social media content on a consistent basis, your need for web programming, video editing, public relations, or content writing might be sporadic.

Every marketing department's needs are different, but the specialization almost never fits perfectly into a structure that can be achieved in-house, which is why almost every marketing department is augmented with siloed freelancers and agencies.

Optimizing your teams' ability to collaborate cross-functionally with other teams can give your marketing department a competitive edge and bring team productivity to an all-time high. In addition, cross-functional teams can spark innovation, break bureaucratic boundaries and reduce production cycle times by granting a more collaborative environment.

This effective collaboration can be achieved when team members, both in-house and external, have a strong understanding of the common goals and have a clear picture of the objectives required to achieve them.

Creating a structure that allows specialists and generalists to thrive can offer some unique challenges, but those are not without solutions.

## CROSS-FUNCTIONAL TEAM BEST PRACTICES FOR LEADERSHIP



A few ways you can improve and maintain practicality within cross-functional specialization includes:

- ▶ Establish a project leader who will be accountable for the project's success
- ▶ Offer clear, consistent communication across the board to maintain a sense of teamwork and organization
- ▶ Align on shared goals and objectives across all functional areas and incorporate the agreed-to goals and objectives into all organized plans
- ▶ Consistently check in with team members to ensure they feel supported and that they understand the goals and objectives and where their roles fit in

The key to leading cross-functional teams is getting the balance right between alignment and autonomy. When you arm your team with a clear understanding of the goals and a sense of self-reflection of your culture and value system, you will have a significant advantage in answering the question of how to organize your team for success.

## IN-HOUSE OR OUTSOURCED?

While building a remote team from the ground up is a challenging initiative that requires a thoughtful and nuanced approach to be truly effective, if you understand the unique benefits, set expectations upfront, stay organized, maintain efficient communication, and utilize the right technology, your remote marketing team will have everything they need to succeed.

In an ideal world, your marketing department would likely include communications specialists, graphic designers, website developers and designers, social media personnel, email marketers, SEO specialists, advertising professionals, public relations specialists, a project manager, and a strategist to keep programs moving in the right direction— and depending on the industry, additional personnel for highly-specialized tasks, such as photographers, programmers, and video editors. But for most businesses that don't have the budget for a comprehensive in-house marketing team, a full-scale team is not possible.

Instead, most marketing departments are composed of a few in-house marketers who specialize in a few key areas or are marketing generalists. To fill the necessary skills gaps, marketing teams are frequently augmented with freelancers or small agencies to fill in temporary needs and long-term needs for specialized project execution.

If you have used this approach in the past, you already understand that many challenges come from relying on freelancers to fill all of the marketing gaps, such as inconsistent quality, disjointed communication, lack of company-unique knowledge, and the time associated with vetting and managing these relationships.



## Specialization Challenges

Modern marketing requires a diverse range of cross-functional specialization and the work that demands that specialization often needs to be coordinated with other efforts that are from an entirely different discipline.

When marketing teams attempt to solve this challenge entirely in-house, this structure leaves their team wearing too many hats, feeling stretched thin, and struggling to provide high-quality work. The alternative of augmenting their marketing department with specialized freelancers creates a disjointed, less collaborative, and less efficient work environment that does not share a common company culture.

## Workflow Challenges

Although each marketing role has inherently distinct functions, every team member's overall workflow should be consistent. Workflow management is indispensable for building efficiencies into processes, so your team can spend more time doing meaningful work and less time feeling frustrated and worn down because of procedural roadblocks.

Maintaining consistency in execution style requires daily structures, systems, and operational goals to set your team up for success. However, when gaps form within those structures and systems, communication begins to break down, team members feel overwhelmed from too much disorganized work, tension sets in, and things fall through the cracks.

## Consistency Challenges

Maintaining brand consistency is critical for building and strengthening your business. If you want to create a memorable and trustworthy experience

for your customers and clients, every single touchpoint representing your brand has to be succinct. It needs to ring out loud and clear, giving off a unique personality, voice, and tone that align with your mission and bottom line.

However, maintaining brand consistency becomes a challenge when you rely on freelancers and agencies. You need to explain in-depth brand details with every new relationship brought in, coordinate the style of the brand guidebook, and explain how the brand guidebook is applied to project execution. All of this takes up valuable time and energy.

## HR Challenges

Managing a series of fragmented freelancers is a very different experience from managing in-house employees.

Freelancers each have their own work style, communication style, and varying levels of management requirements. Managing the nuances of each freelancer or agency relationship quickly becomes complicated, costly, and time-consuming.



## EVALUATING SOLUTIONS

After reading those challenges, it likely makes you feel that creating an in-house remote marketing team is the best way to go.

Unfortunately, it is not that simple.

For many businesses, the high costs associated with maintaining a full-scale, in-house marketing team are astronomical and way beyond what the budget allows. To have an all-encompassing marketing team requires multiple, specialized professionals that come with hefty costs for salary, benefits, etc. This is precisely why so many marketing teams are augmented by freelancers and agencies.

So if hiring freelancers comes with significant challenges, and trying to fill an entire marketing team with all in-house employees is also not possible, what options do you have?

The answer is complicated and there is no clear solution. In fact, this is the exact challenge that our team at SharedTEAMS has been working to solve for our members for the past 4 years.



## SECURING HIGH-PERFORMING REMOTE TALENT

### DEFINE THE ROLE

Access to better talent, improved productivity, and increased team collaboration are just a few of the many benefits of hiring remote workers. However, due to the unique nature of remote work, the hiring process needs to take a slightly different approach compared to traditional hiring processes. After all, you are not just looking for the right job skills; you are also looking for the right remote work skills required to be successful both in the role and while performing it remotely.

Before you begin sourcing and interviewing candidates, you need to ensure the definition or job listing is clear, concise, and gives a detailed description of the job expectations. Companies often throw out a very vague or general job description and hope for the best, but the only way to truly get the best applicants is by being

incredibly detailed, to the point of over-the-top detail. By doing this, potential candidates will better understand the job requirements and help them decide if they want to work for your company or have the necessary skills to be successful within the role. Being hyper-detailed in your job description will also help weed out candidates who wouldn't be good fits and give you more time to focus on the true potential candidates.

So, how do you define the position? It starts with making sure that you take some time to understand the work the role is responsible for performing. This can be accomplished in one of three ways:

## DEVELOP A DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF THE ROLE

To give your hiring manager a deeper perspective, have them shadow the role they are looking to hire. If the role is new, they can shadow someone within the same field or department to gain insight into the ins and outs of daily responsibilities, the type of personality that would blend well, and what type of unique talent or skills would be beneficial for the role.

This method is often done by the company [Basecamp](#) when they are hiring for a new role. Jason Fried, the company's co-founder, [talked about this unique approach in a Reddit AMA](#):

When it comes to an all-new position at the company, we like to try to do it first with the people we have so we really understand the work. If you don't understand the work, it's really hard to evaluate someone's abilities. Before we hired our first customer service person, I did just about all the customer service for two years. Before we hired an office manager, David and I mostly split the duties. That really helped us know who would be good when we started talking to



people about the job.

Jason invested himself into gleaning the necessary knowledge on the role and responsibilities it entailed before beginning to look for someone to fill it. While this method is not for everyone, if you can take this approach, even for just a few days, it will offer valuable insight to help you better hire for the role.

Committing to understanding the roles you need to fill will help you best understand the unique intricacies required for the role and set you up for success within the hiring process.

If shadowing jobs or doing it yourself prior to hiring is not possible for you, there is another equally useful method.

## EDUCATE THE HIRING MANAGER

Recruiters at Zapier, a company that successfully manages over 300 remote workers worldwide, utilizes this approach. They conduct in-depth kick-off meetings with hiring managers to educate them on the positions they're hiring for. Their recruiters discuss things such as: what a typical day in that role looks like, cross-functional partnerships and how the role interacts with colleagues across multiple teams,

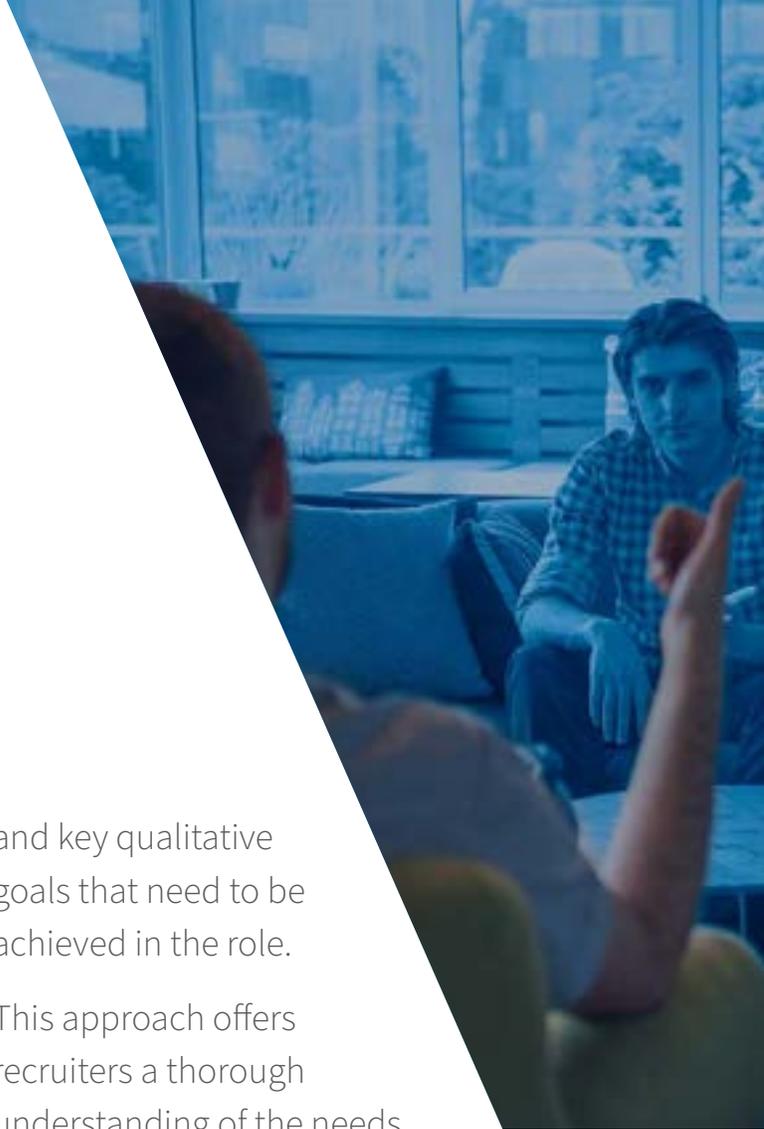
and key qualitative goals that need to be achieved in the role.

This approach offers recruiters a thorough understanding of the needs and requirements of the role to better serve them throughout the hiring process.

Both approaches offer a great way to prepare you and your team for hiring remote workers.

## OFFER MEANINGFUL AND USEFUL BENEFITS

No matter how good the role or paycheck is, more times than not, people are also looking for a comprehensive list of benefits attached to the job.



While health and life insurance are typically at the top of most people's lists, there are other options that you can offer your candidates that will make the job more enticing. Here are some examples:

- ▶ Paid time off and/or a vacation plan
- ▶ Professional development
- ▶ Continued education stipends
- ▶ Memberships to coworking spaces
- ▶ Memberships to health & wellness facilities
- ▶ Monthly personal days

If you are unsure what type of benefits to offer, consider asking your current team members what they like about their benefits package and what other options they would appreciate. This will give you great insights into how to keep your current and future employees happy and healthy.

## OPTIMIZE YOUR HIRING CHANNELS

While the methods discussed above are fantastic for the preparation process of hiring remote workers, there are also some valuable tips for the remote hiring process, as a whole, that we want to list out.

### **Build A Strong Employer Brand Online**

Remote workers spend most of their time online or in the digital realm, so ensuring your employer brand online is solid and visible is a must. Prioritize your online presence to showcase that you're trustworthy and supportive.

One way to accomplish this is by creating informative career pages or blogs that show insights from actual employees. [For example, Buffer](#), a remote-first company, does this by having their employees write about [their experiences](#)



as remote workers for the company.

## Know Where to Source Candidates

Because remote work has been steadily growing over the last few years, most remote workers already have their go-to places to find remote job listings. These do not include the traditional job boards like Indeed or Monster – so if you’re only focusing on listing in that types of places, it’s likely that you’re missing out on talent.

When hiring for remote roles, go where remote workers are. Such as:

- ▶ [AngelList](#)
- ▶ [Remote.co](#)
- ▶ [WeWorkRemotely](#)

These sites are fantastic options for a specific, one-time need. However, it’s not the best approach when it comes to consistent projects or work that needs to be completed. Hiring freelancers may seem like the more efficient and money-saving option, and it can be for a one-time job. But for long-term success, hiring freelancers is not ideal as a lasting solution. The level of quality varies from freelancer to freelancer, and there is always a lack of coordination or structure when utilizing freelancers.

Consider what projects your marketing team will require. Will it be sporadic, one-off projects that do not require many resources or time to complete? What are the project’s goals, and how do they fit into the long-term marketing goals? Answering these questions will help you decide if hiring a freelancer is the right direction to take or if you need more specialized long-term solutions.

Knowing WHERE to look for the right talent is just as important as knowing HOW to hire the right talent and WHAT TYPE of talent to hire.

## OPTIMIZE YOUR HIRING WORKFLOW

Anyone can submit a resume and cover letter. However, rather than requiring the fundamental necessities through the application process, design a value-add application process that helps educate candidates about the position and company while also educating you and your team on the candidate.

A straightforward way of having a value-added application process is by including thoughtful and insightful questions that tie into the unique aspects of the role. These questions provide insight into the role’s duties while also allowing candidates to

showcase their skills and ability to communicate.

Candidates who are genuinely passionate and excited about your company and the open role will always be willing to complete extra tasks during the application process, while those who aren't a good fit will simply skip past your application – which turns the add-value process into an automatic filter.

### **Create a Candidate Evaluation and Management Process**

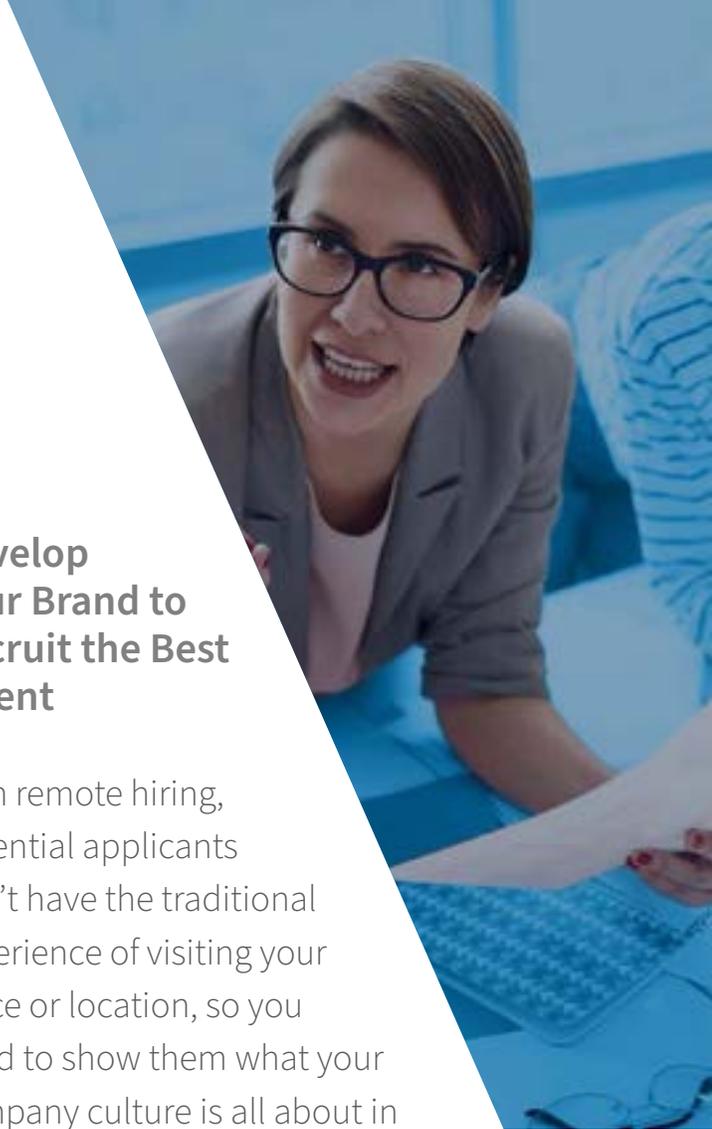
Even before the pandemic, remote hiring was already seeing a steady increase in popularity as company leaders discovered that they could attract stronger talent by broadening their search parameters.

Because remote jobs have become a hot commodity for many, hiring managers face the massive task of assessing, interviewing, and hiring candidates.

Hiring remote employees requires additional steps, time, and consideration to ensure you hire the right person for the job. While time in the role is the best way to confirm someone's aptitude for any job, hiring managers can boost their odds of hiring the right people by considering a few tips on adapting the hiring process to the remote model.

### **Develop Your Brand to Recruit the Best Talent**

With remote hiring, potential applicants don't have the traditional experience of visiting your office or location, so you need to show them what your company culture is all about in the online space. You can achieve this in many ways, including posting photos and media on your Careers page, having a strong social media presence that shows what it's like to work for the company, and investing in strong communication practices among your team.



## Write Job Descriptions with Remote Work in Mind

If you're hiring remote employees, you need to write the job description to make sense of that work model. Remote roles require specific skills to ensure success that traditional in-house roles don't necessarily need. Your hiring criteria need to reflect those unique requirements. Consider adding these critical remote core skills.

- ▶ Time Management
- ▶ Excellent Written Communication
- ▶ Takes Initiative
- ▶ Strong Work Ethic
- ▶ Trustworthiness
- ▶ Ability to Manage Project and Workload with Minimal Supervision
- ▶ Positive Attitude

## Screen Candidates

According to a report by [Toggl](#), traditional in-house positions receive an average of 250 applicants, while a remote role receives anywhere from 500-1500 applicants. And only around 20% could be a potentially good fit out of that number.

Create some simple but effective tests

for applicants when applying for an open, remote position that will weed out candidates who lack the right skill sets needed for success. Assessing remote-specific skills, written tests, communication tests, and productivity tests are all ways to decrease the number of unqualified applicants that you need to look through.

## Identify The Right Candidate

Previous work environments play a heavy role in whether or not employees are successful in a remote environment. Previous work experience that had a lot of autonomy without a lot of direct managerial oversight tends to yield a higher success rate. Additionally - experience working with online project management tools and online collaboration systems, even when coupled with an in-office environment helps candidates be better prepared for your remote role.

One way you can ensure they have the needed experience in previous work environments is through specific screening questions.

Besides the typical interview questions that work across the board, it's good to have remote-specific interview questions prepared to see if the candidate will be a

good fit.

Some questions to include are:

1. What is your previous remote work experience?
2. What does your workspace look like as a remote worker?
3. How do you manage your time working remotely?
4. Do you often feel lonely when working remotely for extended periods of time?
5. How do you handle feedback or conflicts while working remotely?
6. What tools have you used to help manage working remotely?

Asking remote-specific questions can significantly help in your hiring decisions by showing you how the candidate is skilled in the unique environment of remote work.

## Focus on Merit

One unique aspect of hiring remote workers is that it creates an environment where the focus on merit becomes a main priority.

In traditional in-house work environments, people unconsciously pass superficial judgments on to their coworkers. Judging based on external aspects during the hiring process like candidates' appearance, superficial quirks, and style are eliminated from the process, and they are left to evaluate candidates based on talent and relevant experience.

This implementation of “blind hiring” principles ensure a more fair hiring process with the main focus on hiring the best people for the role. Hiring managers can better identify and reduce potential biases in sourcing, screening, and shortlisting candidates that may be ignoring, turning off, or accidentally discriminating against qualified, diverse candidates. They can put aside any preconceptions and keep their minds open to all hiring possibilities.

## **Provide a Realistic Job Tryout**

Remote work is not for everyone. Some people may think they would love it, only to try it and decide it's not for them, while others may not think they will like it, only to try it and find out that they're great at it. Because of this reality, offering an in-depth preview of the job to your top candidates will help both you and them decide if they are the right fit.

This could look like a digital library of content that gives an extensive and detailed overview of the role with some training elements for the candidate to work through. By offering training elements, the candidate will see if they feel good about the process and culture presented to them through training tools while also showing you how they handle working through tasks independently.

Another method is to host a trial period where you give them moderately challenging projects to complete. Many remote companies use trial periods as a final way to be sure both the candidate and the company are happy before an offer is made or accepted.

Trial periods allow you to see how skilled a candidate is when put to the test, how well they learn and communicate, and how seamlessly they fit into your company culture.

Whatever method you choose to utilize for trial periods, make sure to compensate the candidate for their time and work.

# MANAGING REMOTE TEAM PERFORMANCE

Now that you've hired your remote team, it's time to figure out how to structure and maintain them.

While remote work can be a win-win opportunity for employers and employees by offering more employee engagement, retention, morale, and expanding your talent pool, structuring a remote team comes with some unique challenges that traditional in-house teams do not face. For example, maintaining a sense of connection, establishing useful technology, and overcoming feelings of isolation and loneliness are common areas that companies find challenging with remote teams.

To successfully structure and maintain your remote team, there are four major areas that you need to prioritize: Structure, Culture, Technology, and Communication.



## Establish a Remote Team Structure

Flexibility is one of the main benefits of remote work, but on the other side of that, without a solid structure in place, remote teams will not reach their full potential and value. Because of this, companies need to methodically plan out every element of their remote work strategy to communicate their reports and strategies day-to-day.

When creating a remote work structure, you need to lay out standards and protocols for each type of role performed remotely. Things like clocking time/hours, internal and external communication best-practices, check-ins, breaks/meals, deadlines, and meetings.

Jayne Mattson, the founder of CareerEngage and author of *You, You, Me, You: The Art of Talking to People*, discusses this structural idea:

This is basic stuff. When are your people expected to “get to work”? How will general communication happen? What routines can you either continue or can you set up? Developing those routines is one of the most important elements of successful remote work strategies.

Mattson goes on to talk about the importance of getting to know the unique life situations and preferences of your remote team members by saying:

You should always get to know your people’s unique personalities and circumstances, but in a remote work situation, it may be even more important. What is motivating them? What are their constraints? Do they need to pick up kids from school and leave their afternoons open, but then log on later at night? Successful remote work strategies require a mindset shift as well as a practical one — as long as their work is getting done and it’s still meeting performance standards, then when the work is done shouldn’t be as important.

Managing a dispersed team of workers and learning how to organize them for long-term remote work success is quickly becoming an essential skill for



anyone in a management or leadership role. However, with many companies forgoing the cubicle structure, they're left scratching their heads on how to best manage and structure their new remote team members.

Simply sitting back and hoping everything falls into place is not an option. Getting your team set up for long-term remote work requires thought, creativity, strategy, and a little bit of elbow grease.

Here are a few quick tips to help you reduce frustration, create a smooth transition into a remote structure, and allow your teams to continue producing quality work.

## **Establish Clear Communication Channels**

This will look slightly different for every business, but by far, the biggest challenge of remote work is figuring out the best approach to communication. One main point for establishing communication channels is that only choosing one method of communication is not the best approach.

For example: if you only had email as the primary communication channel, inboxes would be inundated with quick question messages, long-form

conversations, client/customer conversations, and more. Messages would easily get lost in the shuffle, and that could cause significant breakdowns in communication and productivity.

Instead, choose a few different channels of communication and then set clear expectations for which channels should be used for which purposes. For example:

- ▶ Email: Team-wide or company-wide announcements, updates, and changes.
- ▶ Video: Important meetings, brainstorm sessions, performance reviews, or one-on-one check-ins.
- ▶ Instant Message: Casual conversations, quick questions, time-sensitive requests, and team connection.
- ▶ Workspace Platform: Questions related to specific topics or projects, work organization, and project presentations.



## Set Flexible but Specific Working Schedules

One of the biggest pros to remote work is having a more flexible schedule. But, working remotely does not mean that your team can have complete control over their schedules. If this were the case, work would be scattered, deadlines would be missed, and communication would stall.

Instead, maintain flexibility while also implementing some schedule structure. Such as:

- ▶ Make your team member's calendars visible to everyone on the team to see who is working and when quickly.
- ▶ Require team members to "set their work status" by showing when they are online or offline.
- ▶ Require a specific amount of hours to be logged every day/week/month.

While these changes are seemingly small, they can make a significant impact in terms of transparency and structure when managing remote teams.

## Streamline Processes

Disjointed processes are put into the spotlight when teams no longer work side-by-side in the office. A survey from the Institute of Leadership and Management found that [88% of remote workers](#) felt their team struggled to ensure consistency of processes.

Disjointed processes can cause frustration for anyone, so creating an established workflow that can be utilized across different projects is vital for streamlined processes.

## Set Clear Guidelines for Roles and Responsibilities

Remote teams need to know precisely what expectations they are expected to meet. Roles and responsibilities should be crystal clear across your team. If they are not, expect headaches and frustrations to continue.

A few ways you can accomplish clear expectations is by:

- ▶ Defining project roles and plans.
- ▶ Creating clear role descriptions
- ▶ Recapping meetings and actionable items and assignees.
- ▶ Assigning all tasks within your work management platform.
- ▶ Providing clear and detailed feedback through project work and completion.

By taking these steps, you'll eliminate confusion amongst your team and ensure all expectations and responsibilities are clear at all times.

## Reevaluate and Make Changes Consistently

No matter how organized and clear your remote structure is, there is always room for improvement. Like anything in business, managing a remote team will require tweaking over time. However, it's completely normal and should be approached with positivity and ease.

Gather consistent feedback from your team on what is or is not working and make adjustments accordingly. Your team will respect your leadership more when you do this, as it reassures them that they are seen and heard by you and all other management leaders.

Creating a work structure while also maintaining the flexibility of remote work can be tricky, but in the long run, it will set your team up for success and help them feel supported.

## SUSTAINING REMOTE EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIPS

Now that you have the foundations for structuring your remote team, the next step is understanding how to maintain the team. While the perks of remote work are clear, that does not mean that your remote team won't struggle with challenges or want to leave.

Remote work ≠ automatically happy team members.

Here are some ways to maintain your remote team.

### **Prioritize Work Culture and Values**

Another crucial element to remote team maintenance is work culture. Because remote work is a work culture in itself, it needs to be firmly planted into the overarching structure you put in place. Being deliberate in creating a work culture also means that you're always considering the impact decisions have on your remote team, asking for their input, and doing what is necessary to fill their professional needs.

Discuss your company's values often and have them guide almost every decision you and your team make. By establishing these values, your team will have a baseline for how they approach work as a whole.

## Utilize Asynchronous Communication

Asynchronous communication is the opposite of synchronous communication. It allows remote workers to respond in a timeframe that works best for them – rather than immediately. Taking on an asynchronous approach to communication with your remote workers will take the weight and stress of immediate communication off of their shoulders, allowing them more freedom and focus within your work.

Filip Filipi, [Forbes Council Member](#), and Founder and President of [28.Jun](#), has utilized asynchronous communication with his teams to drive their mission and respond to the needs of vulnerable populations over the last decade.

Asynchronous communication offers many benefits for both employee and employer, such as:

- ▶ Improved focus and productivity
- ▶ Decreased stress
- ▶ Better time management
- ▶ Allows for better work/life balance
- ▶ Sets realistic expectations

Asynchronous communication is quickly becoming the gold standard of

communication styles amongst remote teams to help improve employee experience and retention.

## Socialize Virtually

Remote workers often struggle with feelings of isolation and loneliness. Although your team may not meet in person, that does not mean you can't get together for some time of connecting virtually.

This could look like hosting a virtual happy hour, playing games like trivia, or hosting themed virtual events to encourage your team to get creative and have fun.

And it does not have to be as involved as that. Pose fun get-to-know-you style questions that are not business-related in your general chat platform to spark conversation and aid in the sense of “togetherness.”

## Encourage Physical and Emotional Well-Being

Beyond prioritizing the social connection element of maintaining your remote team, you should also prioritize their physical and emotional well-being. This can be as simple as listening to them when they need to talk without turning it into a work-related conversation or taking what they say personally.

Tom Vranas, Vice President of Innovation and Culture at [Everywhere Wireless](#), puts his team's health and wellness as a top priority in a simple but impactful way.

We moved away from an employee satisfaction survey to a simple, daily email that says, "How was your day?" Not, "How was your workday?" or "What struggles did you face in your work?" But, really, "How was your day?" We've been trying to push ourselves to make sure that people are feeling supported and feeling like they have the space to talk.

Creating an open and supportive space for your team will go a long way in fostering their overall well-being.



## Prioritize Technology

Without the right technology, remote work cannot happen. But it goes beyond just having communication technology such as email or chat solutions like Zoom or Slack. While these types of communication platforms are important, having an actual “systems of work” technology process is needed to serve your remote workers best. [Andrew Hewitt](#), an analyst serving infrastructure and operations professionals at Forrester Research, says this about remote work technology:

We know from our research that as much as 30 percent of what constitutes employee engagement is technology. What leads to engagement is your ability to make progress in your work every day — and the technology you use is directly tied to that. Creating a technology-driven workspace for your remote team will help motivate them, support them, and allow them the freedom to do their jobs well.

Technology facilitates social interaction, work efficiency and helps maintain organization amongst your team.

## FILLING THE GAPS WITH EXTERNAL SUPPORT

Staff augmentation has seen significant growth over the last few years. What was once a general term used mainly for outsourcing has grown into a solid business strategy that will save you time, money, and resources.



Establishing a hybrid work model truly is the best of both worlds for successful marketing teams. A hybrid work model is an approach that designs the work experience around and for the worker, no matter where they are. It empowers your team to work onsite, offsite, and in-between.

By offering a blend of in-office and remote work, your team will be better equipped to collaborate safely and securely, have the flexibility and structure they need, and promote inclusiveness, engagement, and overall well-being for your team.

A team where in-house and external employees are integrated is important because some of the areas of specialization (while necessary) are not significant enough to justify a full employee role. Therefore, augmenting a core in-house team with specialized on-demand talent that is coordinated with that team is essential. When you do this, you'll be able to bring more cross-functional specialists to fill the gaps in your marketing team without going through the process of hiring full-time, in-house workers, which can be time-consuming and expensive. Additionally, you will avoid the headaches of only utilizing freelancers who cannot promise quality work or in-depth knowledge of your unique marketing goals.



## CLOSING THOUGHTS

If you want to build a robust remote marketing team, you'll need to create a solid structure, cultivate an all-encompassing technology toolbox, and consistently improve and grow through communication best practices. As you build up and strengthen your remote marketing team, always keep your goals in mind, building an inclusive work culture that supports your team and provides them the resources they need to succeed in their role.

We saw the gap in the market where so many businesses were not, and still are not, utilizing the cross-functional specialization method to boost their business. We also understand the unique challenges you face as a modern marketing leader. From constantly changing algorithms, tight deadlines, and shifting expectations from generation to generation, it's a lot for you to balance. That's why we created a solution to meet your unique needs.

As a fluid extension of your in-house team, our team of dedicated marketing experts can help produce robust solutions for your business. Our team consists of experts from every category of marketing – advertising, communications, graphic design, website development, social media, and strategy. From beautiful website builds to email campaigns and social media management, your goals will find new breath and greater success when you incorporate a cross-functional specialization structure and bring in our team to fill the gaps in your marketing team.

Learn more [at this link](#).





## About SharedTEAMS

Since 2017, [SharedTEAMS](#) has supported hundreds of marketing leaders to create, manage, grow, strengthen, and sustain their marketing programs. Over those years, [SharedTEAMS](#) has been an all-remote team, having hired, trained, and managed over 100 remote marketing employees.

[SharedTEAMS](#) created this ebook to share the best practices that we have learned through trial and error to build and maintain a successful remote marketing department.