

INNOVATION IN TALENT SOLUTIONS

COVID-19 the impact, and response to talent solutions



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Following the outbreak of COVID-19 and the humanitarian effort to contain the virus, the global economy has suffered a shock to markets, much more severe than the Great Recession.

The speed of this has taken many organisations by surprise, but indeed “necessity is the mother of invention” and in this paper Ignata look at the positive actions and innovations that talent teams and the hiring community can make in response to COVID-19.

The paper includes recommendations from leaders at Ignata to those organisations who need to hire during this period.

1 Employer Branding

The needs of candidates have now changed, and we have observed a shift in the language used by organisations, who are now promoting their employer brand as “resilient to the marketplace” and “financially secure”. In an uncertain period where anxiety levels are running high, the heritage of the organisation becomes much more important, as well as the brand reputation. Organisations should look to revise their messaging to the marketplace and consider the needs of candidates in an uncertain period.

2 Social Purpose

COVID-19 is a critical corporate social responsibility (CSR) issue for us all. The smarter organisations will be conscious of their social purpose in the world and think about how they can promote their values to society

and the ways in which they help others whether clients, customers, employees or wider communities.

The actions organisations take now will long be remembered by potential employees, so organisations should think about what positive actions they can take now and how their products or services benefit society as a whole. Examples we have seen from innovation of new products for medical purposes, donation of equipment to the healthcare, manufacturing of sanitisers by brewers, financial aid packages, free coffee to frontline health care workers or staff volunteering to assist the elderly or vulnerable in their communities.

There will be times when organisations need to take tough employment decisions during this period, but it is the approach and compassion that they demonstrate that will have a lasting impact.



3 Confidence in hiring without human interaction

For organisations who need to hire during this period, then there needs to be a shift in mentality and willingness to embrace technology and the virtual interview room. To make the process more robust and provide further confidence in the hiring process, then we are observing companies seeking further data points to replace the human interaction. Utilising video interviews can make building a connection and rapport with a candidate more difficult as body language is more restricted when on a camera. Psychometric testing, ability tests, online technical tests and personality profiles provide useful tools in place of human interaction, as they give insights into an individual's natural communication style, behaviours and skills.

4 Onboarding Processes and Remote Starts

Many companies traditional onboarding processes will not be possible under today's COVID 19 government guidelines, so HR communities and managers need to look at their 'business as usual' processes and see how these can be adjusted to ensure business critical recruitment continues. Any interim process will need to consider compliance, information security, data protection, commercial risk, health & safety and employee wellbeing, whilst ensuring HR and corporate policies are adhered to.

Thus, establishing what needs to be undertaken, how this will be undertaken and when in the onboarding lifecycle.

During these times, most new hires will be employed remotely; for many individuals they will not have experienced home working before. Companies will need to adjust their processes to ensure pre-employment screening is conducted virtually, information is available online or welcome packs are sent in a timely fashion to reduce any anxiety or insecurity an individual may be feeling and also to try and start the integration into the company, culture and values.

5 Business Continuity and Survival

A proportion of the market has put all recruitment activity on a blanket hold. We are observing that some organisations are taking a different approach and analysing which roles within their business are critical to the continuity and survival of the business.

Whatever decisions are taken on recruitment, given the lead time to onboard, there will be significant longer-term impact on hiring for the rest of 2020 and into early 2021.

Within this, we anticipate that the flexible workforce will be called upon to help the operational challenges ahead and to provide cover for the roles which cannot currently be fulfilled by new permanent employees. The delay to the implementation of IR35 is welcomed and should give organisations more flexibility to access to critical talent.



6 Integration of new remote workers and embedding those individuals into the team

This is new ground for almost every organisation.

To ensure successful integration, organisations need to think in advance about developing virtual and online induction strategies. Providing insight in the initial period on both corporate culture and values and functional specific activities. HR and hiring managers will need to work closely together to ensure there is continual communication and contact whilst the new employee works remotely.

Utilising common language becomes increasingly important so that everyone feels included in conversations and meetings. Undertake or share personality profiles across the team, so that individuals have a wider understanding of each other and how best to communicate. Be aware of acronyms and assign a person (mentor/buddy) to proactively demystify the organisation, business and team.

Remote workers may also benefit from the opportunity of talking to someone outside the organisation regarding how they are feeling and any challenges they are facing. Coaching, mentoring and health & wellbeing services can all help support the new employee. Also highlighting the services offered, via healthcare benefits or employee assistance programmes that the organisation may provide.

It is important to meet the team virtually, both for work and social purposes.

Daily team meetings using Microsoft teams for example. On a Friday, a social to chat focusing on the weekend ahead helps bond the team that cannot meet in person.

The advice for managers is to be available, but don't micro-manage. Stay connected!

7 Removing the probationary period from the employment contract

We have observed organisations who have either removed the probationary period from the employment contract or extended the period of probation during the period of COVID-19, in order to provide more security to potential new joiners. There will clearly be a nervousness from candidates as to whether this is a good time to join a new company and we saw these actions as positive steps to provide assurance and confidence to new employees.

8 Video call with the CEO or HRD

Effective candidate management has never been more important, than it is in today's market. Providing continual candidate reassurance, from the point of offer all the way through to onboarding and beyond is essential.

One of our clients has introduced a personalised video call into their onboarding process, for new joiners starting over the next few months. Whereby the CEO calls the individual to provide reassurance and confidence to the candidate that their role is secure. This will have a lasting effect on the new employee and their feelings of engagement and loyalty to the organisation.



Why Ignata Actuarial & Investments?

Ignata Actuarial & Investments is a team of experienced consultants, with backgrounds in executive search, HR, management consulting, recruitment & interim management. By working collaboratively, we give our clients access to the best talent in the industry, most of which is unavailable on the active market or through existing networks. Our deep experience of these niche markets gives us a knowledge base, which our clients use to inform their talent strategy. As Talent Consultants we provide advice on the candidate market, employer brand perception and competitor analysis, advice which is proven to have a direct impact on business performance.

About Ignata

Great people are hard to find. Great teams are even harder. Combining expertise in Recruitment and Consulting, Ignata are leaders in both. With the firm belief that people make the biggest difference in business, we help organisations become the best versions of themselves, bringing them expertise dedicated to helping them achieve their goals.

It's said that the great innovator, Thomas Edison, had a sign on his laboratory wall which read 'there's a way to do it better - find it.' This constant quest for improvement defines Ignata perfectly.

Founded in 2011, we have grown to become a go-to partner for business-critical expertise and our global growth strategy has resulted in a collective of exceptional talent solution brands, each a leader in their sector.

We're proud of our reputation: finding the most perfect solutions to our client's challenges, with a 'whatever it takes' attitude and approach - even if it means challenging the industry's status quo.

Ignata - 'there's always a better way'

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to know more



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