To: Dr. Erika Paterson

From: Jen Deluz

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Subject: Proposal for Effectively Integrating New Hires Remotely at Speakbox

**Introduction**

Speakbox is a growing social enterprise providing mental health professionals with an effective practice management software. The platform has continued to grow by developing new tools and features based on feedback given from existing clinicians. Given current circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, public health experts strongly recommend companies to encourage all employees to work from home. Remote work will aid in preventing and mitigating disease transmission around offices, public transit, and households. The onboarding process will also be done remotely to follow workplace guidelines and risk mitigation set out by the government.

**Statement of Problem**

Numerous disadvantages accompany a team as they transition into an entirely virtual workforce. Unfortunately, several of these challenges can negatively impact companies. Employers and employees may face certain struggles as they adjust to working remotely. As employers and employees adjust to working remotely, they may face certain obstacles:

* isolation — employees may find it more difficult to feel connected and a part of the company.
* lack of access — absence of an office may make personal communication more demanding with the lack of body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice.
* decreased visibility — employees may feel a lack of visibility of work within internal and external teams.
* limited team building — restricted opportunities for employees to bond may hinder the ability to establish relationships with coworkers.

In addition to these obstacles, new employees may face onboarding hurdles. Without the ability to learn from a colleague, new hires may take longer to properly learn the required tools and processes.

**Proposed Solution**

To overcome some of these challenges, it is important to adjust the onboarding process and adapt accordingly to given feedback. To begin onboarding new hires, companies can make an announcement to welcome all new employees to the team. To ensure that new hires feel welcome, companies can even include additional swag along with their work equipment. Within a virtual workforce, it is necessary to enforce practices that will promote open and honest communication. Tools, such as Slack for messaging and Zoom for video conferencing, can be utilized to assist with asynchronous communication. Employee satisfaction can be improved by encouraging employees to openly share their concerns and ideas. Regular check-ins can be scheduled on daily, weekly, or monthly intervals as a team or one-on-ones. Team activities can also be scheduled regularly to encourage team building. Exiting employees can streamline the hand-off process more efficiently by recording procedures and exercises where appropriate, to aid in the onboarding process. In addition, implementing a new hire buddy system can be beneficial to help new employees connect with the team and settle into regular routines. Lastly, it is important to gain feedback after the probation period on improvements for onboarding new hires.

**Scope**

To assess the feasibility of this solution, I aim to investigate the following questions:

1. What obstacles are the current employees facing while working remotely?
2. Will it be beneficial to develop a unique onboarding plan for each new hire according to personalities?
3. How can workplace productivity and efficiency be balanced while managing employee socialization?
4. What actions can the company take to eliminate workplace isolation?
5. Which activities do employees believe actually promote team building and teamwork?
6. What are the approximate costs for implementing the provided suggestions, such as communication tools or team bonding activities?

**Methods**

Primary sources of research will be collected through surveys and interviews with existing employees and new hires at Speakbox. These methods will provide valuable insight on the opinions and perspectives of employees. Observation research can also be done to evaluate the current onboarding process to determine areas of improvement.

**My Qualifications**

I have experienced several onboarding processes for technology companies in the past year; in person then remotely at Traction on Demand as a Salesforce developer intern, remotely at Speakbox as a junior software engineer, and remotely at Kabam as a software engineer co-op. I am familiar with different processes and methods that can be used to onboard new hires. I have worked in office and remotely, providing essential insight and firsthand experience while being integrated as a new hire. My association with Speakbox and my previous professional experiences will provide me with the opportunity for an in-depth feasibility analysis.

**Conclusion**

As a startup, Speakbox will find it necessary to evaluate their onboarding process as the company continues to grow. It is important to engage new hires from the start, to build and improve employee loyalty and retention. By addressing the six questions listed above, I can determine the feasibility of effectively integrating new hires remotely at Speakbox. With your given approval, I will begin research that will be conducted for the next 13 weeks.