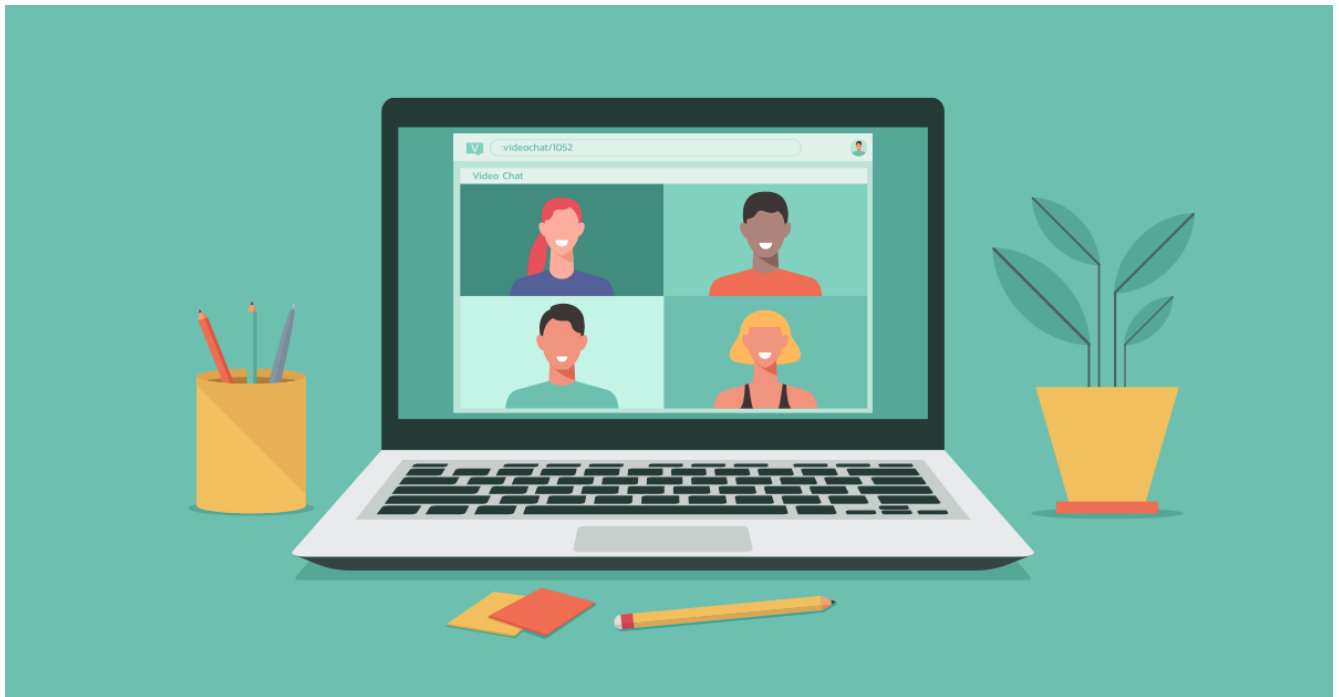


# Hiring a Remote Work Legal Team



Before the pandemic, remote work was only available for the affluent few.

Roughly 9.8 million out of 140 civilian workers total in the U.S. had access to remote work in their workplace. Today, an estimated [70 million-plus](#) Americans now work remotely. These numbers continue to rise as employees state they would rather work from home forever.

The legal industry is no different.

The pandemic has [changed the legal industry forever](#). More and more firms are going remote, virtual law firms are on the rise, [replacing the traditional law firms](#).

## Law firms with the right remote workers win

The demand for attorneys is growing rapidly. An ABA Journal post found attorneys are in high demand amid the Coronavirus pandemic, protests, and the economic downturn. Contrary to expectations, clients are desperate for help on complex

legal matters.

“From advising employers how to respond when an employee tests positive for Coronavirus to counseling employees afraid of catching it at the office, lawyers are working around the clock to help clients navigate the uncharted legal waters sparked by the rapidly spreading COVID-19.

These lawyers and firms are helping others at the same time they are grappling with the significant effects of Coronavirus on their own operations, such as the need to close their offices and require employees to work remotely.

Firms are also bracing for the pandemic’s long-term economic impacts that could boost demand for some legal services, while depressing the market for others.”

The right remote team wins in the end.

But why?

The skills and competencies needed to perform at a high level in a traditional law firm are not the same skills needed to perform in a remote, distributed, or virtual environment. More importantly, hiring the wrong people has a detrimental effect on law firms.

## How to hire the right remote workers

Research by Dr. Bradford Smart, author of the bestselling book [Topgrading](#), and founder of Smart and Associates, found that a single mis-hire costs organizations [5x to 27x base salary](#). His research shows that a single mis-hire with an average salary of \$114,000 would result in a total mis-hire cost of \$2,709,000 or 24x the salary!

It’s a mistake law firms can’t afford.

There is a lot at stake for law firms, especially in our current economic climate. Here’s how you can guarantee that the people you hire will be the best fit for the job.

1. **Use your network.** Reach out to people you have worked with in the past. If you had a great relationship, ask if they are in touch with any other candidates.
2. **Meet-ups and events.** Reach out to specialty clubs or groups, e.g., the rotary clubs, investor clubs, specialty forums, etc.

3. **Employee branding and reviews.** A strong employer review portfolio leads to a 50 percent increase in qualified candidates and a 50 percent cost-to-hire reduction.
4. **Employee advocacy.** Give engaged “patriot” employees the tools they need to pursue A-player candidates on their own. Incentivize employees with a strong offer, e.g., if a referred associate is still an employee after six months, you reward both the referred and referee with \$5,000.
5. **Freelance remote workers.** Working with freelance remote workers allows you to evaluate potential employees in a live setting. You can attract and convert high-value talent at a considerable bargain.
6. **Use specialty job sites and job boards** to find trustworthy freelance associates, paralegals, and managers who you can test out on a trial basis.
7. **The traditional approach.** If all else fails, you can take the conventional method via ads, social media, referrals, etc.

At this point, your applicants should be rolling in.

At this point, it's a good idea to ask yourself about the culture of your firm. According to Jeff Lawson, chief executive at Twilio, your **culture is living values**, here's how you apply it. First, write your values down; make them available to everyone in your firm. Next, you create a culture when everyone works together to *live these values out* in their day-to-day work life.

This is especially important with remote workers.

When you cement your culture, you set the tone for the kind of employees you will attract to your business. If you want aggressive go-getters in your law firm, you're going to attract that if that's already present in your culture.

What you give you receive.

Ready to sort through your list of potential candidates? Here are some steps you can follow when hiring remote employees.

1. Sort potential applicants in a private project via your practice management tool.
2. Use a remote-friendly interview tool like [HarQen](#) to screen candidates via text, audio, and video interviews. Use HarQen to conduct tandem digital interviews.
3. Test candidates with a freelance project or bring them on, on a contract basis.

4. Ask candidates to schedule a three-way call with the references on their resume (A-players will jump at the chance to show off their skills, B and C players will disqualify themselves from the hiring process).
5. Introduce new hires to the entire team.

At this point, your new hires have joined the firm. How do you go about onboarding your new associates or support employees? The onboarding process is relatively straightforward:

- Make sure each new hire has the necessary credentials, docs, software, IT hardware, and handbooks they need.
- Send new hires the paperwork they need (e.g., HR, healthcare, legal, tax, and financial documentation).
- Provide your new hires with the training aids, modules, and materials they need to get up to speed.
- Pair new hires with an existing buddy hire, an experienced associate, for example, and make sure new hires can reach out to them for help, guidance, and connection.
- Ping partners and managers to outline goals, objectives, and expectations.
- Introduce new hires to existing employees.
- Send them a welcome care package to ensure they feel like part of the team.
- Schedule training for your new hires with IT, product, or service demo experts in your organization.
- Schedule regular follow-up meetings and check-ins for the first 90 days to 1 year.
- Arrange an in-person get-together if they are near your location or the location of their buddy hire.

Successful onboarding is less about a knowledge transfer and more about seeding relationships and establishing connections.

### **Remote teams outperform traditional teams**

Research shows remote work can produce better results for your law firm.

[Remote work teams outperform](#) those in a traditional in-house environment.

They're [13 percent more productive](#), and those who choose remote work say they'd like to work this way permanently.

Remote work is here to stay.

Hiring a remote employee doesn't have to be a terrifying ordeal for your law firm. It can be profoundly positive, producing exceptional results for your firm; with the

right talent and skills, you'll be able to weather the cultural and economic storms the legal industry currently faces.