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The one quality CEOs look for in remote workers

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The one quality CEOs look for in remote workers. Source: Getty

Coronavirus has undoubtedly changed the landscape of the workforce, with many Australians taking up the option to work from home - at least part-time - even once the pandemic subsides and offices reopen.

But choosing to work from home after being a full-time office worker is a different kettle of fish to being hired remotely, and working remotely from the get-go.

"It's much much easier to take an existing team that has worked together in an office, and then move to work remotely," Andrew Maloney, CEO and founder of Student Super told *Yahoo Finance*.

"You already have a team culture. You understand each other, and you know how to work effectively together."

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But take the workers from the office, and you miss incidental social interactions that build work relationships.

And according to CEOs and heads of departments, the one quality that's really going to get you hired as a remote worker is this: being an independent self-starter.

Here's what the bosses think:

Fred Schebesta, CEO and founder of Funder.com.au

"When I'm hiring for a remote position, I'm looking for someone who is proactive and innately driven to do great things," Fred Schebesta told *Yahoo Finance*.

"A self-starter can collaborate with others but is also capable of working autonomously and thinking laterally."

And you need drive, he said.

"As well as being a self-starter, I look for people who have that fire in their belly and who are hungry to win. When we created the *Funder* app earlier this year, I hired developers with these attributes to work on the project remotely."

Alan Manly, CEO of Group Colleges Australia

You need to be independent, and be fully capable of fulfilling your social needs outside of work, Manly said.

"Candidates for a remote worker position are those folks who are not dependent on, or desiring of, social interaction with others to fulfill their personal needs or work tasks," Manly said.

"Then the challenge is to ensure that the task assigned to a remote worker is also independent of location, usually online based, and not dependent on a team to be fulfilled.

One job that might not work remotely is sales, Manly said.

"Interestingly sales teams do not seem to perform when separated from their work social group or team peers.

"It's a version of matching the skills and personality into the work situation. It would appear that 'the more things change the more they stay the same'."

Andrew Maloney, CEO and Founder of Student Super

You need to be self-motivated and reliable to be a remote worker, Maloney told *Yahoo Finance*.

But there's a little more to it.

"Counter-intuitively, we don't want to hire remote workers who are too independent - if they don't know something they should connect back and ask," he said.

"So maybe the biggest thing to look for is great communications skills. You don't want a remote worker off on their own disconnected path."

And you'll need some face-to-face time throughout the year, he said.

"We will fly in remote staff once a year for an office day, with a relaxed lunch."

If you're planning on hosting video chats for office workers to talk to remote workers, then you should "democratise" them, Maloney said.

"Instead of three people in the office and the remote worker on video chat - put everyone on video chat. It puts everyone on the same footing," he said.

Jay Munro, head of career insights at Indeed

Fine-tuning your soft skills like problem-solving, independent thinking and adaptability will go a long way, Munro said.

"Because working remotely can blur responsibilities and make collaboration more difficult, demonstrating softer skills like problem-solving, independent thinking, adaptability and communication will go a long way," he said.

"Familiarity with virtual management tools, ability to motivate others, experience overseeing projects and examples of



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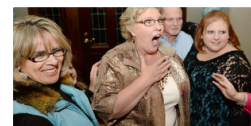
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how you've evolved to suit new situations, processes, and challenges are all in demand in the shifting labour market."

And preparation is key.

"Whilst many businesses are now offering remote working opportunities, there may still be some trepidation, so some solid examples will be key to putting an employer's mind at ease from the outset," he said.

"Get a feel for the qualities to highlight by reviewing a range of current job advertisements, identifying sought-after soft skills and developing examples based on recent experiences."

Leanne Harwood, managing director IHG Australasia & Japan

Leanne Harwood, managing director of Intercontinental Hotels Group Australasia and Japan looks for the same qualities in remote workers as regular employees.

"IHG has had a culture of flexible working for quite some time in Australia so, as far as I'm concerned, all corporate colleagues can be potential remote workers and we are happy to flex around them where it makes sense," Harwood said.

"Allowing people to work remotely doesn't need to be handled with kid gloves, if you're employing the right people who have a passion for their job and deliver on their goals, then I don't give two hoots if they're not sat in front of me."

But she admits it's all about trust.

"The pandemic has forced some organisations that may not previously have been comfortable with remote working to rethink their position very quickly, and it's probably been a big learning in trust for many leaders - being prepared to tap into passion and intelligence, and to trust in the people around you, requires a sense of self actualisation and being comfortable in your own skin," Harwood said.

"Yes, there are some roles that don't lend themselves to flexible working so easily, and people who work in hotels are a good example, but even we've stepped up our game there with initiatives that allow our colleagues to fit work into their lives in a way that better suits them, especially at a time when family is everyone's number one priority."

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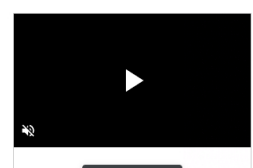


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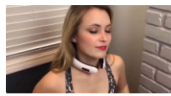
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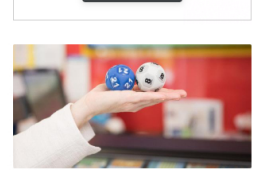
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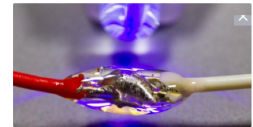
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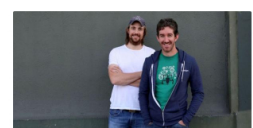
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