

How to Improve Your Remote Hiring Process

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SPEAKERS

Jamie Rofkar, Halie Morris

H Halie Morris 00:00
Hello, everyone, and welcome to The Business of Cleaning. My name is Halie Morris. I'm your podcast coordinator and host as you know, and today's episode, we've actually pulled for similar content that we recorded a little while ago. Actually, back in the fall, when things were still a little unknown. As far as the virus goes, now that we've got a vaccine, and things are starting to hopefully look up, of course, we're glad but the work environment and the way things are shifting and changing. Obviously, it's still a little turbulent and unknown. And part of that means that we're recruiting more remotely or doing more remote interviews, or engaging with our potential recruits and new hires and a digital environment more often than what we're used to. And so this episode touches on how to adapt to that type of environment and what changes you can make and how you should approach it as a recruiter or as a business owner within this space. And so we've brought on our HR generalist here at JM, and that is Jamie Raff car. So I'm going to go ahead and let the episode roll. So Jamie can introduce herself.

J Jamie Rofkar 01:43
Hi, like Halie said, I am the HR generalist here. I've been at double A solutions for about a year. And up until very recently, my main focus was recruiting I had hired in the past year to I believe it was 26 people. So definitely a lot of experience in this world with recruiting

and hiring. And things definitely have changed in the past six months. As far as you know, I have taken on some extra responsibilities with the HR generalist role, but also just the way we're doing recruiting, what we're paying attention to for hiring and onboarding and all of those things. So definitely a lot of cool things to talk about.

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Halie Morris 02:24

Yeah, so go ahead and tell us a bit about how things were prior to COVID. Because I think many of us are familiar with at least what our processes look like on a typical evening and 2018 2019 when it comes to HR. So what did they look like for web solutions?

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Jamie Rofkar 02:43

I was always really and I still am. But it was always really big on the personal touch. We had more than one in person interview so that lots of people could meet an applicant. See where they were gonna fit into the company. They could see the culture by walking into the office and seeing what was going on. We saw the whole process was we phone screen we had in person interviews, and then the job offer onboarding. We also really, I think, did a great job with onboarding. Haley actually did a lot of that project where we were kind of moving things around and making things better. But making sure that a new employee met everybody in the office got a tour, you know, all of those personal touch things, which is definitely something that's changed. So

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Halie Morris 03:37

yeah, I remember we started somebody the day we transitioned to remote. Actually,

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Jamie Rofkar 03:44

we did. We did. And that was super interesting. Because as quickly as we had to change, there was absolutely no plan. The day that somebody we didn't know we were going remote. So to have that plan in place, it really was kind of what's going to work best for this person. There's one person that's starting today, what can we do to make them feel like everything's gonna be okay, because everything is was a little bit uncertain in the world at the time. I'm starting a brand new job the day everything shutting down. So with that particular thing, we did have the employee come in and pick up their equipment and then go home. And I stopped over her house later that day to pick up her paperwork and fill it out with her. Because at that point, we all kind of knew something was going on, but we didn't have the worries about the masks and the worries about six feet and social distancing and all that we just knew kind of knew something was coming. So that

particular situation, we you know, really individualized for that bad employee and how to move forward for that day. And then from there, okay, how can we make it a little bit smoother for the next employee? And kind of have that plan in place ahead of time?

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Halie Morris 05:09

Do you know, do you know how many employees we've actually started in a remote setting,

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Jamie Rofkar 05:15

including in that first day? I believe it's been five full time employees into interns, I believe. So I mean, that's great growth for a company during all everything that's going on. And also has definitely given us a chance to get that get that policies, the policies and procedures in place.

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Halie Morris 05:40

Yeah, I remember, because I actually, for those who are listening, I mean, I transitioned into my role, partway through quarantine towards like the summer months. So I was still helping you with the onboarding. And we were just kind of rolling with the punches and on different projects. So onboarding was an occasional thing that I helped with at that point. But obviously, it's not just the onboarding that's changed, coming back to that kind of core of what so many people are perhaps facing now, as we shift back into more people, more people going into jobs, again, is the recruitment. And hiring climate is so much different, simply because it's rarely in person these days. So how has it shifted for you?

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Jamie Rofkar 06:30

We have done everything we can to keep our process the same, but just not in person. So a lot of the process, you know, we get job applications, we do the phone screening, but then when it comes to that in person interview, what are we going to do? I actually had a first in person interview scheduled for the day that we left the office. The applicant was able to be flexible, we rescheduled it for the next day. And I had to figure out how do I do a virtual interview. Zoom is second nature now. You, you know, you get dressed, you get ready for work, you sit down, you have a zoom call, or Microsoft Teams call. But at that point, I wasn't doing anything virtually. So I didn't even know that Microsoft Teams could do calls. We use teams at our office. I know a lot of people use zoom or other things. But I was convinced that we I needed a zoom account, I went to our IT guy and I said I need a zoom account, I have an interview I have to do. And he said Why do you need a zoom

account, you can use Microsoft Teams. And he very nicely taught me how to use it. So I came home, I called my best friend. And I had her walk through it with me so that we could take screenshots and we could make a how to guide to share with people because it was so new for so many people. So we've just taken know the old process, the old things that we've done, and we've put them into a virtual setting. So we still have the in person interviews, just on the computer. And then when somebody starts we do have some people in the office, a couple people have trickled back. So there's somebody there to get a computer ready for them, they pick up their computer, and they start working virtually as well. That's part of the part of the process now is we don't set up a computer ahead of time we get the equipment ready, and then it's done virtually, right. Yeah. So you know, going back to the zoom account thing made me laugh a little bit, because I did sign up for one, it's nice to like sign in. And I have meetings on my zoom line that there's somebody, I use calendly. I don't know if you're familiar with that. But I love not until you showed me and that's a great virtual. There, I learned so many virtual tools that I didn't know that I needed. But actually I needed and the way that you use that with talking to so many people outside of the organization, which is also something I do with my interviews, you know, you're talking to people outside of the organization. So it's cool to see those other tools that are available as well. Yeah, and that was one that I chanced upon it. And the the free version lets you do quite a lot for a short time. And so I started using and then I was like, Sam, who is my boss, I was like, I need this. And he was actually fully willing to invest in it for me. So I usually, anytime I'm making initial contact, I have a set of I do a zoom phone call or in person if they're in Toledo and they pick one. And so if in person they say well, like we'll set up a location later and that usually means means meeting on a patio at a restaurant that has space. But most of the time it's Zoomer, it's phone calls, some people aren't comfortable with the face to face. I don't know how much you realize, but that but like what's nice if it's a zoom call calendly integrates zoom, so It automatically adds it to my calendar. Very cool.

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Halie Morris 10:04

And I just signed in to zoom and click it and open it. And I'm good to go. So from my site, it's easy from their site, they have to go into the calendar. But it's so much easier than it was before. And I'm setting like sometimes like three or four appointments a day, which I'm sure for us even more abundant. But yeah, no, I zoom. Okay, I got the free free account, but I just usually, but it was kind of like, oh, I've never I'd never used zoom, I'd never used teams outside of the office either. So I can only imagine it for you, the very next day have to run an interview through it.

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Jamie Rofkar 10:43

It worked out very well, honestly. But, and I think so much of that is just remembering that, yes, things have changed. Yes, we're in a different world. We don't know, I have no clue how long I'm going to be at home for you know, my daughter is having school in the next room. That's not something that any of us are used to doing or have anticipated. But every the world still goes on, and you still have to finish what you started and do things the right way. And everybody's going through the same thing. So having that flexibility and being able to adjust, be flexible, be able to, you know, shift focus quickly. But that also keep things going. Are the real things that I've had to be a big focus?

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Halie Morris 11:38

So kind of out of focusing, especially in running interviews online, because it sounds like for many people that application, the phone screening process, it's gonna probably be pretty similar if not this before. But on zoom call, it's like you've seen the teachers and other things face, other organizations face. When you're in a zoom call, do the rules in the office still apply type question? Do your old rules still apply? So for you, what are the big do's and don'ts that you expect of an interviewee, when you sign on for that for the interview? That's a good question.

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Jamie Rofkar 12:15

Um, I think every recruiter and every hiring person is probably going to be a little bit different. And you're going to have that in in person. And virtually, I'm making a really big effort to give everybody grace. Like I was saying everything's different, but everything's different for everybody. So we kind of have to take that into consideration. Somebody might not have a stable internet connection, I was actually doing a client in class presentation yesterday for the University of Toledo and my internet, just totally was gone. Like, I don't know what it looked like on their end, but I'm sure I just dropped off the screen and you know, their presenter was gone. And we have to take those things into consideration and not create a bias out of it. You know, somebody might not have a super professional background. This is my office that I've cleaned up for today. It doesn't even normally look this good. But it's cluttered because it's my space. And there's no other space in my house that I can go to, honestly, I mean, we have to remember that for other people, too. So from a recruiter standpoint, I think that you know, the do's are to be flexible. If somebody if somebody is five minutes late to an office interview, it might rub us the wrong way. But we might have to think about, hey, maybe there was traffic, same thing at home, you know, if somebody is five minutes late, maybe they couldn't get connected, maybe I'm not gonna call out our local internet provider, but maybe their internet provider isn't connecting well that day or, you know, something like that. So do give people grace. Don't over judge what's going on in somebody's life. They're looking for

a job for a reason. So in work, I look at recruiting as helping people, you know, we're here to help them get into a company where they're going to be a good fit, or it's going to be mutually beneficial for both of us. So don't write someone off just because you know, their internet was choppy, or they didn't have on their suit and tie like maybe they would in the office. From an interviewee standpoint, from an applicant standpoint. I think you do want to remember too that it is still an interview you still do want to be as professional as you can. You want to treat it just like you would walking into a building, do your best to be on time. You know where your what you would do an interview at that particular company. No, every company is different. But you know, you want to do your best to make it Like it is in person, and then we as recruiters want to do our best to understand it might not be exactly like it would be in person.

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Halie Morris 15:07

That's a good point. No, I like that. That's, I think, especially knowing so many people who are transitioning back into the work environment, or transitioning from college to work, which is a whole new battle. It's important to note like these things, because it's such a, you don't go out and interview for a job every day, or at least most occasions, you might have a couple months where that's what you're doing, because people aren't hiring the same way or because your skill set is very niche, or something like that, that you're you know you're looking for, but you're not doing it every day of the year. And it's nerve wracking, and it's intimidating, and you don't know what people are thinking. So to have that perspective on the recruiter side of their human humaneness error, and then also an internet connection, a computer problem assignment problem that's fixable. A bad attitude or bad work ethic is not something that you're going to be able to train up in an employee. So making sure you're focusing on those things that matter, for sure, for sure. So I guess, you've gone through this process, you've transitioned from your typical phone screen, your application, and perhaps your testing and things that you might do for an assessment level. And now you've adapted your in person interview to zoom or teams or whatever video online platform you're using. And you found the perfect candidate or the perfect two candidates, because there's a lot of cool people out there. And you want to hire them? What does that look like? Now, as you start to bring somebody on before you get to the onboarding, that whole offering process? What does your paperwork look like? What does that final signup look like? Is that different than it was before,

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Jamie Rofkar 17:01

that has been one of my favorite changes. When we were in the office, we did everything on paper, and I'm super old school, I didn't mind that I liked it. I like, I have my notebook here on my desk that I work, I keep doing everything in Well, in the office, I do everything in

OneNote and things like that. But now that I'm home, I've got my notebook, and I've filled up almost this whole notebook since we've been home. But that was not gonna happen. With offer letters. I know, one of the first people that we offered, didn't have a printer. So he had to go to the library to print it out. And then he had to sign it. And then he had to go back to the library to scan it and send it to me. And then I had to print it out. And I had to sign it and I had to scan it back in and it was just becoming such a process that wasn't working. So kind of admitting that defeat, you have to be able to admit that, hey, maybe this isn't the best for what's going on right now. I'm doing some research. And we found a company that allows us to esign our paperwork. It's been magical. To me, the offer letters come back way faster, because somebody just needs to click it and, you know, puts their little signature in, it's got a page that says everything's official. So we're able to get the offer letter and the background check. And all that pre employment paperwork that you signed up, I'm definitely seeing that, where it would take three, four or five days before to get an offer letter back, if somebody didn't have a printer, if somebody didn't have access to be able to do certain things. I'm tending to get offer letters back like same day, just because it's easier. So that's another example like Haley, you had mentioned with your new software you're using being able to do those e signatures, we actually implemented an HR system that has allowed us to, you know, have our onboarding process be much more fluid kind of keeps everyone accountable with checklists and things like that. And what we were using before had checklists as well. But just having it everything in one place has been very, very beneficial as well. So I guess, you know, like I mentioned taking that step back saying, Hey, what's not working and what can we fix has really helped us to move forward during the six months that we've been at home.

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Halie Morris 19:34

It's exciting to hear and it's I know, you and I talked before, I am a huge fan of E signatures because of how quick they are. But perhaps people aren't aware of somebody in the stage right now that they're still doing paperwork, and you know, they've got adopted or things what would you say are maybe the pitfalls or the things those people should take into consideration when they're actually considering an E signature. Maybe it costs more, or maybe they just don't want to adopt a different process because of that, that training period, that learning curve that they have to get over.

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Jamie Rofkar 20:10

I really do think it just comes back to taking a look at yourself and your processes and being able to say, hey, this isn't perfect. As far as cost and things like that, there's been a lot that has changed because of the pandemic, the system that we're using actually always used to have a cost. And since everything went home, they do now have a free

version of it. Not super convenient for certain things, I'm not able to have templates, like every time I put a paper in there, I have to reset it up. But it's totally free. So there's definitely options out there for people to be able to change those processes. And, you know, you asked about, how do you get to that point, like, if there is a holdup in it, it's just, I guess really being stronger than your Hold up. Because we don't, I went to an HR conference yesterday, that was virtual, it was super, super cool. And the keynote speaker was Trevor Noah, super, super intelligent guy. And one of the one thing that he talked about that I really grabbed on to is that we have to start planning for what we're gonna do when this is over, because we don't know when it's going to be over, it could be over tomorrow, or it could be over. I'm not even going to go with a long one. Because I don't want to jinx anything. But we don't know when it's going to be over. So we have to start planning for things for when it's done. And start planning for things for now, for today, and how are we going to get through this. So

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Halie Morris 21:52

I would have to say to that my listeners are probably sick of hearing it because I think I've mentioned it in most episodes is that a lot of the changes we've seen are probably long standing changes, they were things that are already kind of in effect, like e signatures are becoming more and more popular. I had heard of when I was in college, I'd heard of classmates doing virtual interviews. And I was like, How the heck does that work? I still don't know how the heck that works. Because my company loves me very much. And I'm going to keep it that way. But I at least know how to do it from the podcasting side. I know how to operate zoom. So a lot of things have changed. But we were kind of moving towards that point. And I truly think some of these changes are here to stay.

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Jamie Rofkar 22:37

Oh, for sure. From a business perspective? Absolutely. Because we're able to see, you know, when you take that jump and you go, Oh, no, I need to do this right now, you're able to see that it actually does work. I know there are companies who absolutely never were going to let their employees work at home, because nobody is good at working at home. And then they had to let their employees work at home pretty much and kind of were able to take a step back and say, Oh, wait, people still are productive, people are still doing okay, and are looking at their policies and their procedures and changing things for the future. You look at an office setting. Now, you know, we all could be back in the office in a couple months. But you still don't want people to come to work sick, because that's going to start people being worried and you don't want people hiding the fact that they're sick because they don't want to miss work. So you have to take a look at all your different policies and procedures. And I do think that a lot of business things are going to change in

the long run.

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Halie Morris 23:41

I think so i think so a lot, especially like the whole sick thing. I think we had a couple people who had been here a while and who were able to work remote when they got sick if they chose to, but it just kind of like now we have, like 80 90% of our workforce is remote. Oh, and that's only because a couple of us have transitioned back in just for the separation or for a little more guidance if we have like the interns exam, as an example. So now, I think I think that's a great point. We are kind of transitioning, we're transitioning very well. Everybody is facing some kind of shift. And when it comes to the HR and recruiting, it's just remembering we're human at the end of the day.

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Jamie Rofkar 24:29

And that's the whole thing. Like if they call it human resources for a reason, I think it's just you know, it's focusing on that people that people part, and remembering that, you know, everybody, and truly the whole entire world is going through something at any time. But right now we're all going through some stuff. And whether it's because of the pandemic or whether it's because of other things that are going on in our worlds. What It's a big everybody thing or it's something going on in your personal life, everybody's going through something and being able to take that into consideration. Being able to take, you know, to not have those preconceived notions about people, you know, somebody comes up on a virtual interview or on a call like this, and you can see out their window and they didn't cut their lawn, and oh, my gosh, they must be horrible. We can't think like that, because we don't know what's going on. And we're invading people's spaces by doing it this way. We're going into somebody's his bedroom, which is not a typical job. You don't normally have those in bedrooms. So being able to take a step back and remember that people part of it, I think, is, I think it's always been huge. But I think it's going to continue to be huge going forward.

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Halie Morris 25:52

I think, this year, took us by the shoulders and said, loosen up.



25:57

Yeah.

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Halie Morris 25:58

we just got to keep it with us a bit. So all right, I think Jamie, this is a really great place to end this conversation we've talked about a lot, it's a lot of food for thought, especially from both sides of the conversation. So do you have any other advice that you would like to offer before we

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Jamie Rofkar 26:14

close out I think just the biggest two things to concentrate on probably in life in general, but especially with life right now is to be flexible, and be able to to move and to give people grace because those are the things that are going to help you to find the right person. And it's going to help that for that bright person, find your company. That's the best fit for them. So giving people grace staying flexible roll with the punches and just, you know, keep going. Gotta keep going.

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Halie Morris 26:48

All right was a great episode, I want to thank Jamie once again for recording with us and allowing us to reuse and repurpose this content for various ways within the company and also everybody for tuning in for yet another episode of the business of cleaning and rejoining us of course for our second season. If you have any questions feel free to shoot us an email at marketing@DoubleASolutions.net. So once again, that is marketing@DoubleASolutions.net. So go ahead and shoot us a message if you have any content ideas or if you would like to be a guest or you just want to connect and learn more about the show, we're always willing to talk. Thank you and have a great rest of your week.