



NO. 6 | NOVEMBER 2022

A Founders' Guide to Building a Winning Team

MONEY



Recruiting on a budget

Everything you need to know

How to build a thriving team

Starting with your "why"

Using freelancers to fuel your growth

Find out how to go about it

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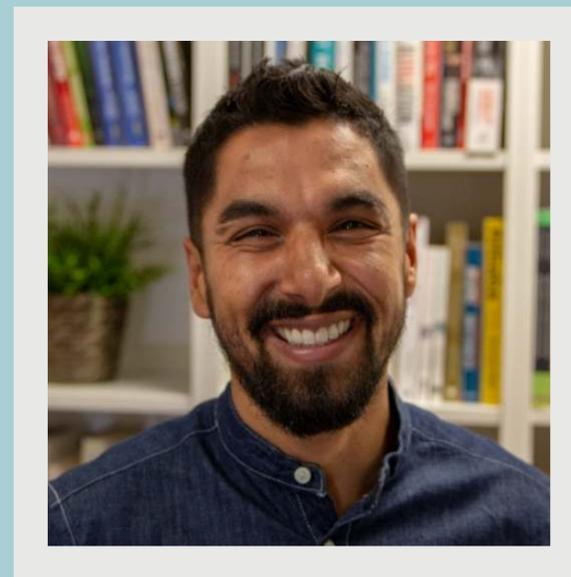
Featuring



Matt Doyle
Co-founder of Array



Molly Johnson-Jones
Co-founder of Flexa Careers



ZeShaan Shamsi
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01.

Introduction

Hello founders, and welcome to this guide on how to build a winning team. Starting and growing a new business is one of the hardest things you'll ever do, and if you're at the stage where you need to grow your team to achieve your business goals – congratulations! Most startups won't ever reach this step, so you should feel proud of getting here.

Whether you started up as a solo founder, or with co-founders alongside, taking the step to start building out a new team means that you're ready to take on a new challenge in business. As will all areas of startup life, with growth comes growing pains. So we're here to ease them as much as possible.

The more you want to achieve with your business, the more you'll be relying on a brilliant team to deliver - as a founder you cannot do it all. And the better prepared you as you grow your team, the more your business will thrive.

A great team is paramount to any business success, so we want to help you make the right choices as you grow.

Whether it's your first employee or your 50th, if your recruitment is successful your team can be too.

If you can get great people then everything else becomes so much easier.

This guide will help you in how to hire, who to hire, when to hire, and making sure that as a founder and leader, your values and purpose remain strong in your business. We'll talk you through how to use freelancers and contractors, how to prepare for scale, how to navigate recruiters and what mistakes to avoid. We hope you find it useful, and remember there are lots of other guides in this series to help make you a better startup operator.

The world of work has changed forever, and it's never been easier to run hybrid teams, made of in-house, remote, and freelance teammates, operating from any location on the planet. The world, quite literally, is at your fingertips. Let's dive in.

02.

Your first hire

Starting a new business doesn't mean you'll definitely hire employees. What your business does, and your ambitions for growth, will impact the team you build around you. If you are growing the team beyond its original founders, doing it well takes time and money, so we want to help you make the right choices at the right time for you and your startup.

In this section, we want to help you get prepared to hire your first employee. For help with finding and hiring freelancers, head to [page 23](#).

Before getting around to writing job descriptions and advertising it, it's helpful to ensure you've considered all your options and what's best for your business. That's why we've created these steps which you should follow before you start to advertise your first role. Once you do, you'll be in a strong position to get recruiting.



Define your strategy

Before making your first hire, it's helpful to understand exactly what that person will mean for your business.

As well as giving you a much needed sounding board over a morning cuppa, new employees are resources, and as a founder it's your job to allocate resources effectively. Having a clear strategy will help you decide what areas of the business you need to bolster to hit your targets, be them financial, environmental or social.

For example, are you trying to build capacity?
Replace your own labour to free up your own time?
Increase revenue? Reduce costs by bringing something you are outsourcing in-house?

Map out your current and future team

Whether your current team is yourself, you and a co-founder, or more, mapping out your existing team's roles and responsibilities against your current needs, based on the strategy above, can help you identify the gaps in what you need versus what you have.

Consider creating an organisational diagram, sometimes called an organigram, to help you visualise your current team and how you want it to grow.

ZeShaan Shamsi, from start and scaleup specialists People Collective, shared with us a free template for you to fill in when planning your recruitment, including help with filling out job descriptions and inspiration for interview questions.



“Don’t be too proud to admit you need help. The best thing anyone can do when hiring is to ask people who have already done it for advice about what makes a good or bad person for a particular role or business.

This is especially true when you are hiring someone to do something you don’t have the knowledge to do yourself. If you are a non-technical person hiring a developer for the first time, reach out to any founders you can who have been in that situation. Who did they hire and why? What went wrong and what went right? How would they do it differently if in the same position again?”

Nick Coates | Virgin StartUp Business
Advisor and founder of Food Founders

Tip

Even as a founder it can be helpful to have a role description for yourself, to help you and your new team understand what you do and how it relates to them.

Calculate your costs

If you're employing someone, you need to factor in more than just what you'll pay them as wage.

To do this, you'll need to account for their wage, insurance, taxes and pension contributions, as well as equipment like a computer and other items like a uniform. Put all your costs into a spreadsheet alongside your other expenses to ensure you can afford the staff you need. As you'll see on the table below, an employee on a £32k salary will cost you at a minimum £40k per year.

Here's a breakdown of the costs you'll need to consider before making your first hire:

Along with their base salary, you'll need to account for:

- **Recruitment fees**

Recruitment fees vary from free for listing one job on LinkedIn, to between £150 - £700 to list on some websites for a month. Recruitment consultants will charge a % fee of the successful candidates annual salary, so when you're using recruitment agencies be aware of the costs.

- **National Insurance**

As an employer you need to pay National Insurance Contributions for your staff.

- **Employers' Liability Insurance**

As an employer, you need to get Employers' Liability Insurance, and your policy must cover you for at least £5 million. This type of insurance will help you pay compensation if one of your staff gets injured at work or becomes ill because of the work they do for you.

- **Pensions**

As an employer, you have a legal right to offer a pension programme if the employee:

- Is aged between 22 and the State Pension age
- Earns at least £10,000 a year
- Works in the UK

As their employer, you will have to make minimum contributions to your staff's pensions, which will be a percentage of their salary.

02. YOUR FIRST HIRE

Here's an example of the costs to you - the employer - hiring someone on a £32,000 annual salary:

	Per Week	Per Month	Per Year
Gross Pay	£615	£2,667	£32,000
Employer National Insurance	£66	£287	£3,446
Employer Pension	£15	£64	£773
Employer Total Cost	£697	£3,018	£36,219
Optional extras			
Office equipment including a phone, laptop and monitor			£2,500
Desk in co-working space			£1,200
Recruitment fees			£500
Sub total			£4,200
Total costs for 1st year			40,419

Your First Hire

Employing someone for the first time? HMRC have a handy checklist which you need to follow to ensure you're all set up correctly.

01. Check your business is ready to employ staff
02. Recruit someone
03. Check they have the right to work in the UK
04. Find out if they need a DBS check
05. Check if they need to be put into a workplace pension
06. Agree a contract and salary
07. Tell HMRC about your new employee

Read the full list [here](#)

Write a job description

Writing a great job description is difficult - but when done well can help you get matched with the right person.

Remember, when drafting your own job description, lead with your startup's purpose, as this will set your job apart from the competition, and can help inspire recruits to apply.



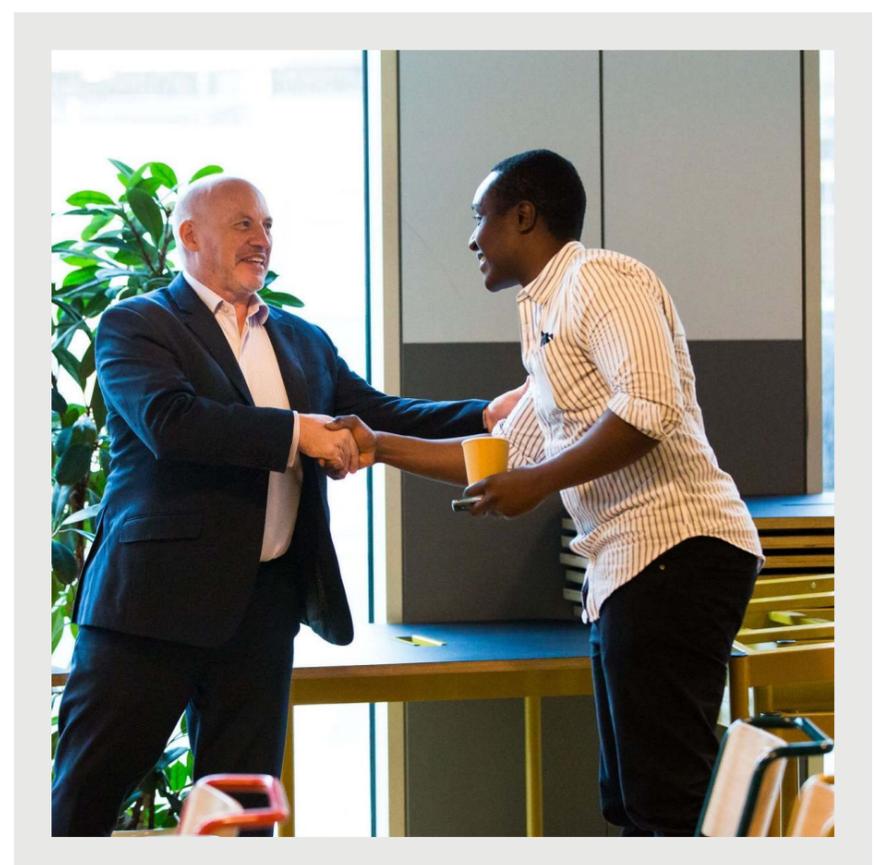
Market your job

Now you have your job ready to go, it's time to start advertising your role.

Remember, when drafting your own job description, lead with your startup's purpose, as this will set your job apart from the competition, and can help inspire recruits to apply.

■ Your networks

Former colleagues, co-founders, other team members, mentors, investors, friends, family and enemies, send them the job posting and encourage them to share with their networks.



■ Social media

LinkedIn is the most popular professional social network, and has inbuilt recruitment tools, so alongside posting the job on their jobs site, creating organic posts on your personal account with why you think working with you will be great, as well as the perks of the role, will encourage applications from your networks.

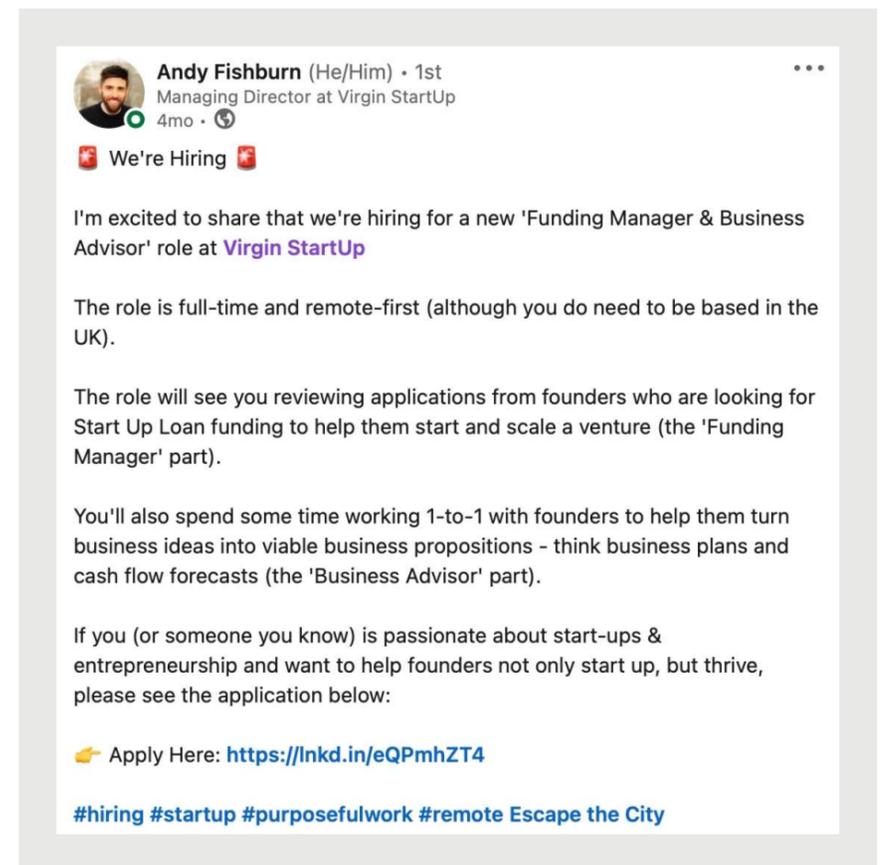
■ Events

Getting out to events, whether online or in person, can be a really effective way to meet potential employees. Find events in your industry or communities for the role your recruiting, and get down to pitch in person. If you can secure speaking slots, all the better, as you'll be able to pitch to a larger audience in your authentic voice.

Amazing people can be hard to come by, and whilst promoting your job for applications is vital, you may have to **approach candidates yourself**. Go to MeetUps, follow people on LinkedIn, engage in these communities, and go and find them. As a founder, you'll have to do some convincing, but you're a founder, pitching is in your blood.

■ Job boards

There are literally thousands of job boards, and some are free and others can cost anywhere from £200-£1000 per month to advertise your role. To find more of the right people, consider specialist job boards for your industry, for example Escape the City, who promote purposeful jobs for people who want to create real change, or WorkInStartUps or Angel List who specialise in listing startup vacancies.



Shortlist your candidates

Depending on your sector and the role you're recruiting for, you may have a large number of applications - even into the 100s - and will need to shortlist before moving onto the next stage.

Shortlisting sounds easier than it is - it can take a lot of time, especially if you've had significant interest - and it's your responsibility to give each application the attention it deserves. Try to aim for a shortlist of 3-5 candidates.

Use a predefined set of criteria to assess applicants against. Here's a few to get started:

- **Experience** - do they have the experience you're looking for?
- **Cover letter** - did they convince you to take them to the next stage?
- **Purpose** - do they share your company purpose and values?

When you've decided to not take a candidate forward to interview, send them an email to explain why. Imagine the last time you applied for a job and didn't hear back - it can be demoralising and misses an opportunity to provide valuable feedback.



The interview process

Once you're ready to invite people to interview, here are a few things to consider before you begin:

- Inform candidates how you structure your hiring process and how long each stage is likely to take.
- Follow up early and often and communicate with candidates at each stage of the hiring process.
- Give candidates your full attention at interviews and respond to any questions they may have.
- Give candidates full information about reference checks and background checks.

As a startup, you'll likely not have a large team already to help with interviews, so consider asking mentors or advisors to join the interview panel. Having a trusted advisor with objectivity can help you make the right call if you're unsure about a candidate. If you are bringing in outside support,



Making your offer

Finding the right person is a fantastic feeling - so when making the offer, it's best to do so over the phone and follow up with an email to make it official.

They may negotiate on salary or other elements of the offer, and approaching these conversations positively can help build trust from day one. They're advocating for themselves in a difficult situation, so be sensitive to that. Once they've accepted - agree their start date and get planning onboarding.

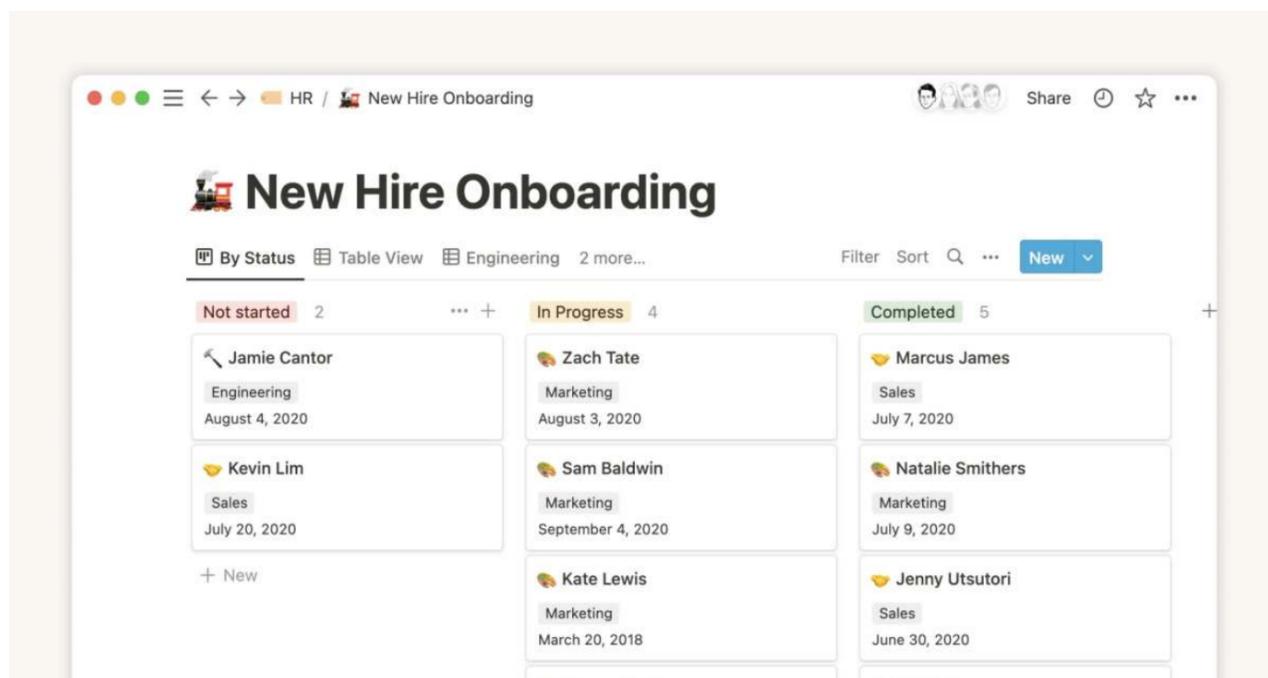


Set up onboarding

Onboarding is how your new hire goes from accepting an offer and signing a contract, to getting settled in at your startup.

It helps guide them through the process including getting familiar with the team, your purpose and the story of your company, along with practical things like equipment, how to book leave and other processes.

By designing great onboarding processes, your new hire will have an engaging and fulfilling experience from day one.



03.

Recruiting on a budget

Costs can start to pile up when recruiting, but there are a few ways that startups can ease the burden when making their first hire. You can also play to your strengths as a dynamic, purpose-driven new business, by offering experiences and a working culture that more established organisations cannot.

When you're making your first hire, here are 5 ways to keep costs down.

Remember, paying people fairly is an important part of being a startup leader, and in the UK there are laws governing minimum wages, click [here](#) to find out more.



03. RECRUITING ON A BUDGET

01. Lead with purpose

As a startup founder, the vision of the business is yours. Whether that's to create incredible products that have a meaningful impact on people's lives, or to help find solutions to the world's biggest problems, it's the founders of today like you, who are the leaders of tomorrow.

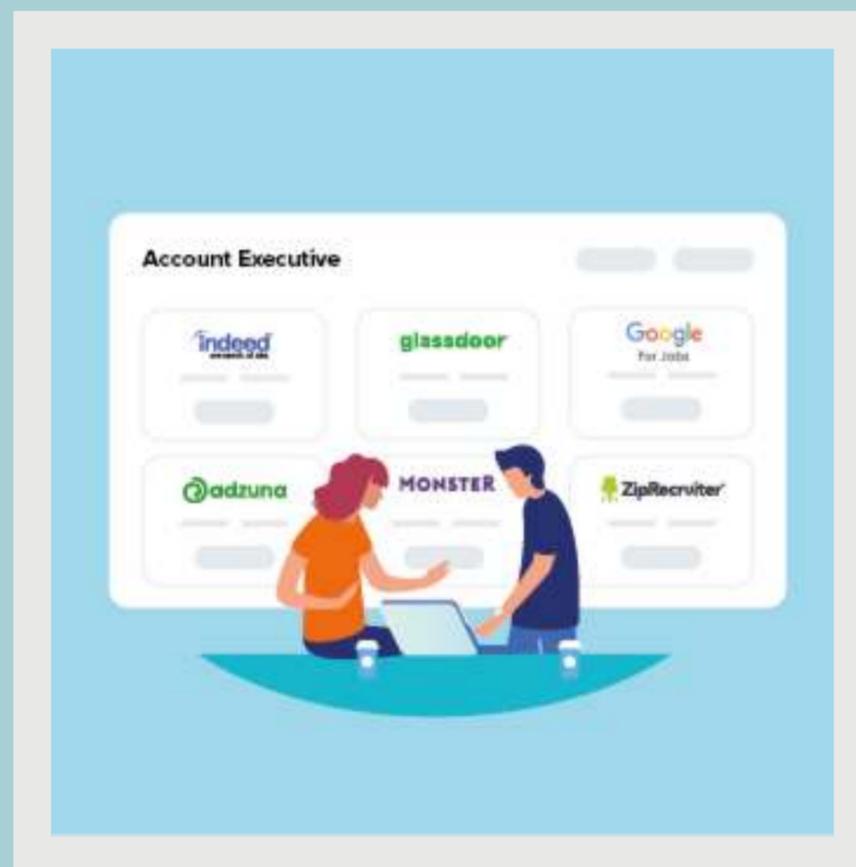
Your vision and purpose is what can set your startup apart from larger competitors. Put your purpose front and centre, build your brand online,

02. Use your networks

Finding great people takes time, and sometimes it takes money too. Job boards and recruitment consultants can be prohibitively expensive for early stage founders, so try to start with your own networks to get the word out. Post on social media, ask your former colleagues, and make sure that the world knows you're looking for amazing people. If your brand is strong, people will be interested despite the fact that your startup is new.

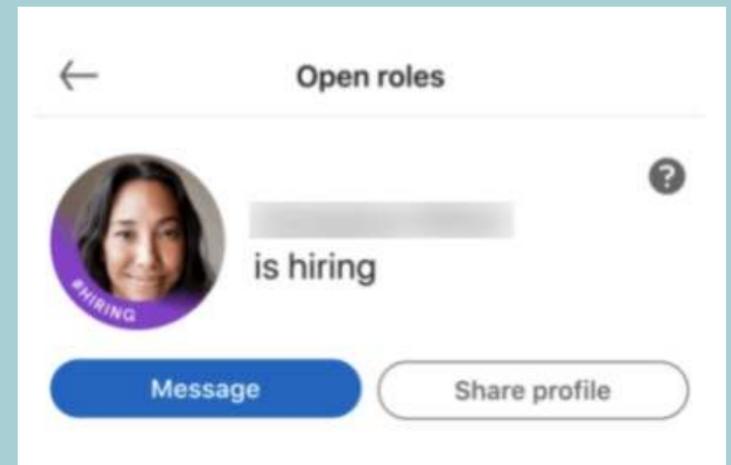
03. Free job boards

There are a number of free job boards you can utilize as a founder at little or no cost. The most effective of which is LinkedIn. There are 35 million UK LinkedIn users, and it's considered by far the most popular professional social networking tool. Once you have your [company page](#) set up, you're able to post one job for free. This is a valuable feature, and once your post is live you'll find a large number of applicants coming your way. Bonus: add the [#Hiring](#) hashtag to your profile photo for more brand awareness that you're recruiting.



04. Online interviews

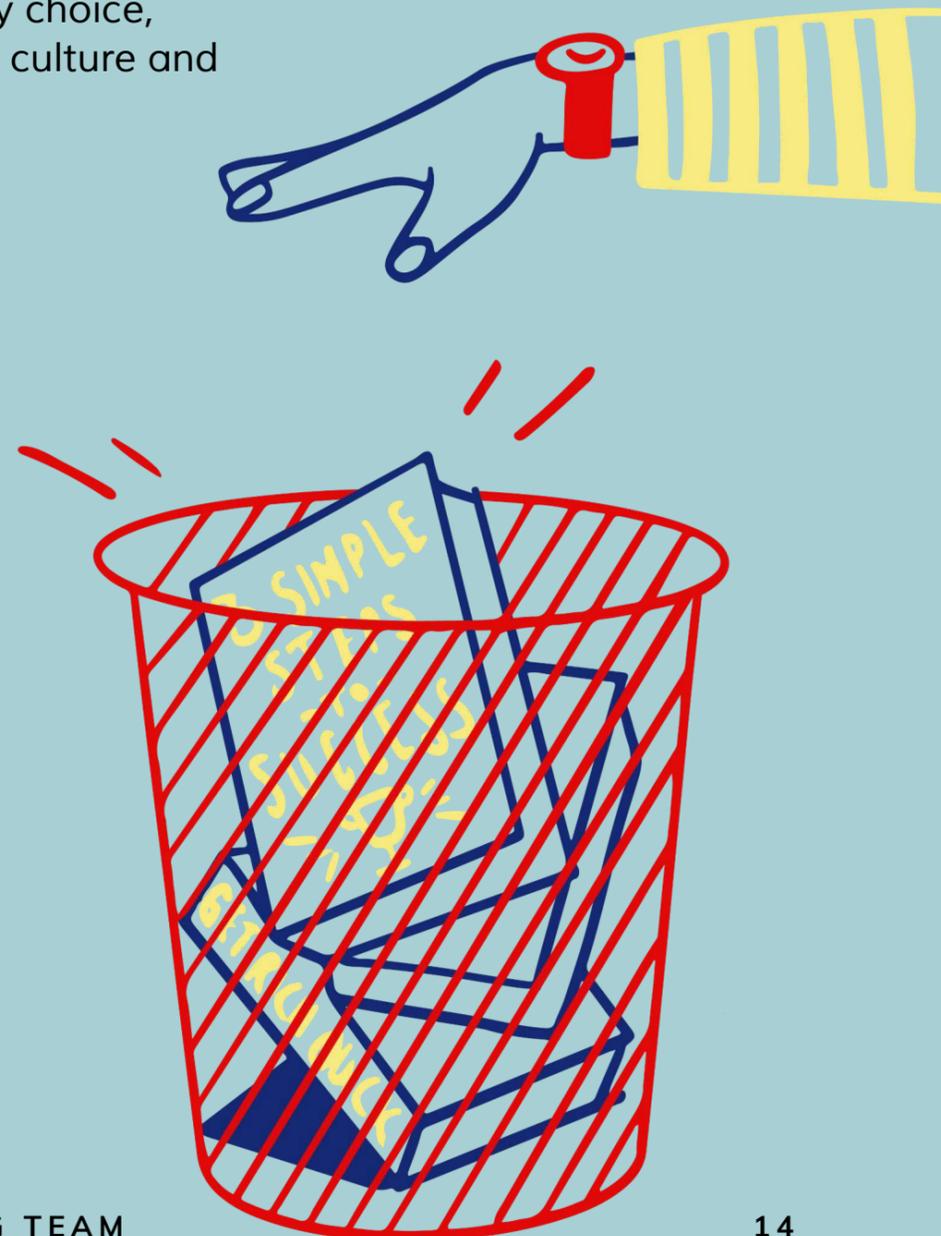
Since 2020 video interviews have become the norm, and whilst they're great for getting early impressions of candidates, meeting up in person can still be a great part of the interview process if possible. When it's not, embracing video interviews on Zoom can be a cost-effective way of running a recruitment process.



What happens when someone **moves on**

Most people you hire will, at some point, move on, either because they quit to go somewhere else, they leave the workforce through other commitments or sickness, or because you let them go.

This is part of running a business which employs people. The key is to try and create a great working experience which they won't want to leave by choice, through building strong relationships, thinking about your workplace culture and making sure that you pay and treat people fairly.



04.

How I hired my first employee: Founder Q&A with Matt Doyle, founder of Array



What year did you start?

2019 with a Start Up Loan from Virgin StartUp.

How big is your team now?

Today, we're a team of 10, and most of those people are full-time, but we've got a couple of people working part time as well. Including those, we're 12 people at the moment.

Did you always know you wanted to hire a team?

Yes. I was excited about having a group of people around me. I'm only good at what I'm good at, and I was excited about getting a diverse pool of opinions and skill sets. And for founders, you can't do it all! As much as you would sometimes love to. So it's essential to have people you trust to take on what you can't.

For me, having a winning team is having the ability to work with the best in class in, in every area.



How did you decide which roles to hire for first?

I chose the roles based on my plan to hire and keep our first customers. That's why my first hire was Brent, who works in customer services. I knew that although our product wasn't exactly where we wanted it to be, that he was able to bridge the gap between us and our customers, and take care of them.

After Brent, it was marketing people to help us get in front of the customers we wanted. Developers came next, and as a tech company it was really important for us.

It's really important for me that the early team were just as entrepreneurial as me; entrepreneurs who had creative ways of looking at things and could really get on with things - to take tough decisions on their own. I think it's really important that your early team members are entrepreneurial, that they enjoy working for a fast-paced startup, and that they can bring ideas.

Trust is so important when you're making your first hires as a founder - so whatever you can do to help develop and cement trust between you and your new team then do it.

Next year you're looking to raise investment - how do your hiring needs change as your business grows?

As we start to grow, we need more developers and more people in sales.

What has been your biggest learning when coming to build a team?

For me, a lot of being a good team leader is communication, and as a leader, you should be over-communicating.

Especially if your team is remote, being in touch not just about day-to-day tasks but about your overarching strategy and purpose is really important. Even if your plans haven't changed, it can be helpful to restate what your company mission is, to keep that message clear.

You should try and find people that you trust. It won't happen overnight, but developing a level of trust between you and your colleagues is really important. That, an avoiding egos getting in the way of good work.

Another learning when it comes to hiring a team is having payroll and HR systems in place. We use a company called Gusto in the USA, which manages our payroll and healthcare, and any other benefits that you offer employees.

05.

Building inclusive teams

A diverse workforce is good for you, your teams, and your business. By practising inclusive recruitment, you can help ensure equality of opportunity for job seekers. There're a few ways to ensure that your processes are inclusive, including:

- Avoiding gendered language in job descriptions
- Using specialist job boards to advertise your role to a broad or specific range of people
- Design an accessible application process, for example, how would someone with blindness or deafness apply
- Have a diversity and inclusive policy which you have designed, and can answer questions on during the interview process
- Running accessible interviews, including asking candidates if they need any reasonable adjustments or have specific needs.
- Although as a founder you may just be the only person interviewing candidates, consider recruiting other people with different lived experiences to join the panel.



06.

Building a flexible workplace in 2023: Founder Q&A with Molly Johnson-Jones, co-founder of Flexa Careers

flexa.

What does flexible working mean in 2023?

Flexible working means different things to different workers - that's the beauty of it. Progressive employers are starting to let staff choose ways of working that suit them, rather than dictating set office days and limiting allowances for working from home. Employers are also embracing the idea that flexible working encompasses so much more than just 'where' or 'when' staff work. Dog friendly offices, job sharing opportunities and fertility leave are just some of the flexible benefits that enable individuals to work on their terms, and thrive.

Which brings me to the meaning of flexible working for employers in 2022: a means of attracting, engaging and retaining the best talent - and that's not changing anytime soon.



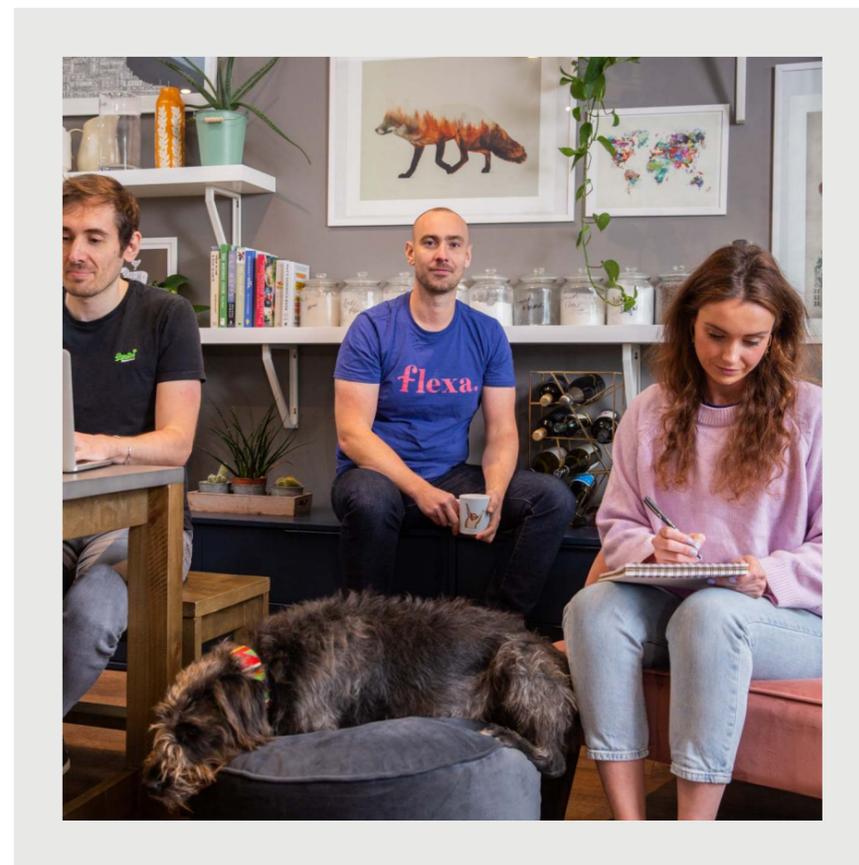
How can startups with small teams embrace flexible working?

Running a fast-paced, fast-growing startup myself, I know from first-hand experience that it's not always feasible to implement every flexible benefit you'd like to all at once. For example, four day working weeks. I think they're a great idea, but I also recognise that they're not always practical for smaller teams like ours to implement. That's why, for now at least, our team works 4 and a half days a week, starting and finishing earlier or later, depending on individual preferences. My advice to other startups would be to adopt a similar approach: adapting and scaling your flexible working offering to suit the needs of both your business and your staff.

How important is it for startups to offer flexible options for teams?

Talent seeking out roles at startups tend to be a dynamic and forward thinking bunch. These are exactly the kind of people who want more freedom and choice over the way they work. So it's unsurprising that, every month, tens of thousands of job hunters visit Flexa Careers alone looking for genuinely flexible startups.

An investment in flexibility is an investment in your team; the very people who will be helping propel your startup through continuing market instability and economic uncertainty. In other words, the importance of offering flexible options - which are practical to implement and sustain in a genuine way - cannot be overstated for startups.



How startups and scale-ups best prepare for the workforce of tomorrow?

Workforces are set to become increasingly distributed, and the asynchronous working patterns of global teams will pave the way for non-linear working days (where individuals can work outside of traditional 9-5 hours, perhaps in short bursts interspersed with longer breaks). So putting in place systems to support individuals who want to work more independently is a good place to start.

But we can't forget that the 'workforce of tomorrow' is made up of countless individuals with countless different needs. The best way to prepare is to forget trying to cater to every single individual. Instead, focus on establishing flexible environments that work for your startup and the direction the business is headed in, and ensure that you're communicating this offering to prospective talent.

Flexibility is a scale, and what matters most is that companies and staff who sit at the same point on that scale can find each other. When this is the case, the end result is always the same: staff who are able to thrive and, in-turn, stay.

As a founder yourself, what was your first hire at Flexa and why?

My co-founders (Maurice and Tim, who is also our Chief Technology Officer) and I spent a while iterating the product as a trio before launching. As soon as we were ready to do so, we hired our Head of Sales in 2021 to start securing those all important contracts. Krys has been with us ever since!

What 3 things would you say are essential to building a winning team?

Build your 'employer brand' first. Ensure that you're successfully communicating and showcasing all that you have to offer. That way, talent who share your values and who are excited and motivated to join your team will find you, rather than the other way round.

Narrow down the qualities - rather than the experience - you're looking for in job candidates. Our incredible Social Media Manager had no direct previous work experience, but I knew she'd be a great fit when she showed us how she'd achieved Instagram fame for her sausage dog.

Be fun. People spend so much time at work, and it should be enjoyable. Create a culture where people laugh and talk about non-work things together. Bring people together, too. In-person and remote working are complementary, so find your perfect cadence and come together to build bonds. We choose to come together once a month for a strategy day, activity, drinks, and dinner. These in-person interactions make a real difference when you're working remotely the rest of the time!

07.

How to build a thriving team with Holly Branson

Holly Branson is Virgin's Chief Purpose Office, and helps bring Virgin's purpose of Changing Business for Good to life through the Group's people. Here's 5 ways to build a thriving team:

01. **Make sure every manager understands that the company's first obligation is to its people and its purpose.** If this isn't prioritised at a leadership level, it's almost impossible to implement. You've got to lead by example and walk the walk, not talk the talk.

02. **A thriving team is built off healthy relationships.** Sometimes businesses get too caught up in the research papers and the workplace seminars and they forget that culture comes from people connecting with one another and forming healthy relationships. Nurturing these relationships in the same way as you nurture the relationships you have with friends and family is a simple way to help one another thrive. We're all human at the end of the day and we're always happiest when we're in healthy relationships.

03. **When teams fail to thrive or culture comes under threat, go back to the basics.** Your purpose and your values should underpin everything you do so if they are healthy, well communicated and prioritised, everything will flow from there.



04. **Don't work in ambiguity.** Provide frameworks and structure so everyone understands their place in the company and the purpose they are working for. How do you measure and assess company values? Are they as tangible as possible? Can everyone really understand the purpose, the business strategy, the team strategies and their place within it all? If people have purpose-based KPIs and receive transparent communication about how the company is living out its purpose and values, they'll feel empowered in the knowledge they are working towards something meaningful. The structure and transparency also helps you to discover and diagnose underlying issues.

05. **Create moments of joy.** Leaders and managers shouldn't underestimate the power of humour and building a fun working environment. It's crucial for building trust, avoiding burnout, and feeling connected with one another.

“Helping people to flourish at work is one of the most important things a business can do. It's one of my biggest motivations as Chief Purpose and Vision Officer at Virgin, and I've seen first-hand how everyone (including your business) benefits when you bring out the best in one another.

This understanding came naturally to us at Virgin – it's just the way dad did business. He saw no distinction between the way you treat family, friends, customers and colleagues... and he still doesn't! It created a very special workplace culture, and it's something we've tried to hold onto as the brand grew and grew.”

Holly Branson | Virgin StartUp
Chief Purpose Office



08.

Using freelancers to power your growth

Freelancers are contractors who don't work for you full time, and are paid usually by the hour or day. Platforms like UpWork and Fiverr have made hiring freelancers from anywhere in the world easy and simple, so in this section we'll help you make the most of freelance talent.

What types of freelancers are there?

For early stage startups with limited budgets and short timelines, working with freelancers can help provide you with expertise in a timely manner to help grow your business, or even get it off the ground. You can hire freelancers to do pretty much anything, but some of the most common types of freelancers you'll find are:

- **Web, app and software developers**
- **Design and creative like graphic designers or animators**
- **Sales and research**
- **Digital marketing like SEO**
- **Copywriters**



of businesses said they are allocating more budget to freelance services. Marketing, IT and tech are the most common freelance professions according to Fiverr.

When should I hire a freelancer?

Your own needs as a founder will vary, but using freelancers can be best suited when you:

- **Need a small task done quickly, like a logo design or a blog**
- **Need expertise which you don't have in-house, like a developer or graphic designer**
- **Want to explore an idea without committing to it, like doing some market research or customer interviews**
- **Have a fixed term project which you don't want to hire permanent staff for, like new product development**

Why should I use freelancers?

Freelancers can help you get work and projects completed in relatively short timeframes by skilled and talented individuals. With the rise of remote work as standard, there's never been a better time to boost your business with freelancers. As a founder, here are a few reasons why freelancers work for your work:

01. Speed

As a founder, you want things done yesterday, and time can be in short supply. Freelancers can not only deliver their work quickly, but the whole process from briefing them, to finding and onboarding them, can be done in rapid succession thanks to freelancing platforms like Fiverr and Upwork.

Freelancers will have the specific skills you need for the job, so you don't need to train them and dependent on the task, they can make progress remotely without having to be in meetings and other team commitments.

02. Your time

As a founder, you're busy as hell and need all the help you can get. Once you've found a freelancer you can trust - more on that later - you can get on with running your business or your other 1000 tasks that you need to focus on.

Some freelancers will be based on the other side of the world, so you might end up being more productive as they get their tasks done whilst you're asleep.

03. Quality

When hiring employees, as a startup you can struggle to attract experienced people with long track records, but when going down the freelancer route you can access top talent and highly skilled individuals at a fraction of the cost of hiring someone permanently.

If you plan your freelancer projects well, working with even top freelancers can be affordable and rewarding.

04. Ease

10 years ago finding freelancers would've involved having your own networks and contacts at the ready, and vetting them yourself. Lucky for you, today hiring freelancers has never been easier thanks to platforms like Upwork and Fiverr.

Freelancers are vetted by the community with detailed reviews and feedback, and once you've set your brief you can invite the top-rated people to pitch for your work. As well as providing time-tracking and milestones to ensure work is on track, these platforms take care of contracts and manage paying freelancers.

05. Scale

You can build a bigger team faster by filling in roles with freelancers. For example, when you are actively developing a new app feature or preparing a major marketing campaign. Or you can get freelancers to fill in for missing roles while you headhunt for permanent hires.

How to hire a fantastic freelancer

Like recruiting permanent employees, to get the best out of working with freelancers, a bit of planning can go a long way. Whenever you add new people to your team, there are risks involved, and when recruiting remotely, different challenges present themselves.

How do you know you've found the right person? How can you trust them with sensitive company information and to deliver on time?

Freelance platforms make time tracking and accountability simple, and with millions of businesses using freelancers every day, reviews let you see exactly how the freelancer performs and the experience of other people who hired them.

To give yourself the best chance of success, put a well-structured process in place, and try to avoid getting the 'cheapest freelancer in the shortest time possible' approach.

As with many things in the business world, cutting corners can mean expensively redoing things later down the line.

To ensure you get the best experience from working with freelancers, follow these steps to get started:

01. Define the project and the role

Dependent on your project and needs, this will vary from 'we need a graphic designer to design a logo' to 'we need a software developer to build our website'. Whatever the scope of the project, the more clearly defined the role you're looking for is, the better matched to the job a freelancer will be.

Ask yourself: "What roles do we need to fill, and what tasks should each role cover?"

08. USING FREELANCERS TO POWER YOUR GROWTH

02. Understand your budgets

Set a realistic budget for the project or task. Keep in mind that many freelancers are business owners; they pay their own taxes, insurance, and overheads, so their hourly rates may be slightly higher than an employee's.

When thinking about project costs, consider deliverables you expect from the project. If you're unsure what work is going to cost, search for similar projects online and see what market rates are.

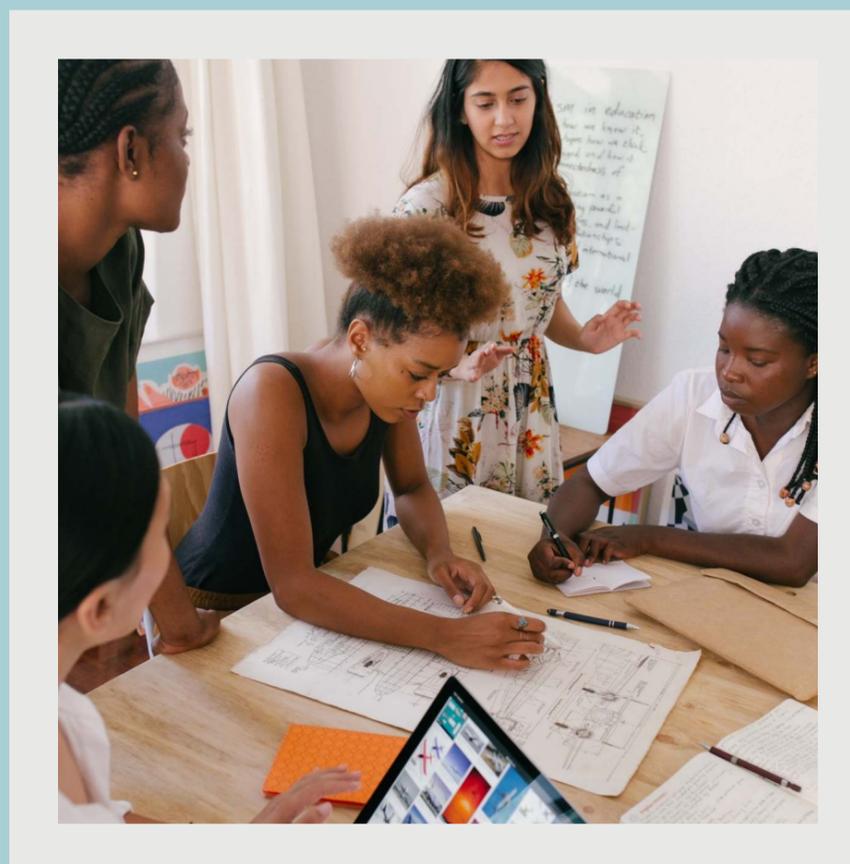
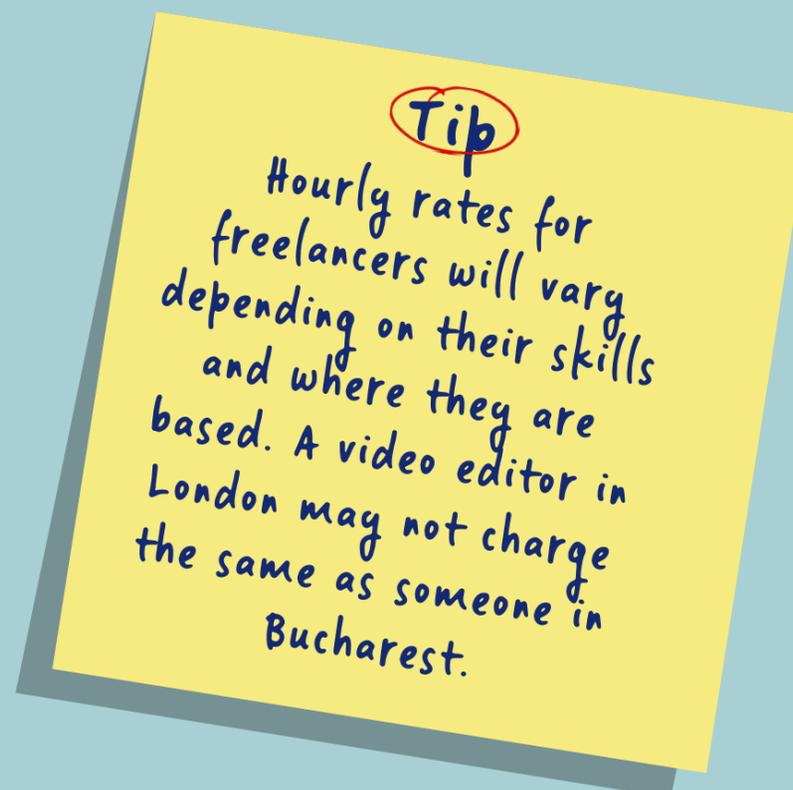
Ask yourself: "What budget can I allocate to this project and is it fair?"

03. Create a really good brief

Creating a strong brief for freelancers to apply against is essential in getting the right person for the role. The more detailed and specific the better. Don't skimp on defining things like timelines, milestones, expectations and ways of working. Check out examples of a good and bad brief from YunoJuno [here](#).

What makes a good brief

- A clear, specific project title
- Thorough project overview with a challenge to be solved
- A detailed list of qualifications or specific skills required
- Information for those who want to review project details and specs



04. Let your purpose shine

As you would a permanent job post, remember to keep your purpose and values clear in the brief, this will help potential freelancers understand the company culture and your approach as a founder.

Ask yourself: “what’s our purpose and why is it exciting to be involved in it?”

[Read example freelancer briefs from UpWork.](#)

05. List your project

As well as listing your freelance project on places like UpWork, Fiverr, Toptal and more, there are other ways you can get the word out about your opportunity:

- **Referrals** - Do you know another founder who’s used freelancers before? Consider asking them who they used and if they’d recommended.
- **Browsing** - As well as browsing freelance platforms, you can search social networks like Twitter and LinkedIn for peoples’ job titles.
- **Social media** - By posting your opportunity on your social accounts, you can ask your networks to share it to open it up to a wider audience.
- **Job boards** - Just as you would when hiring an employee, you can post on job boards and select ‘contractor’ or ‘freelance’.

06. Vet your candidates

Just as you would for permanent hires, consider a set of questions you can ask freelancers who apply for the role. You can interview them and ask for portfolios as you would any other hire. Here are some questions to get you started, but what you will need will depend on your project:

- Please provide examples of previous similar work completed in the past 12 months
- What is your process for managing your time?
- What was your favourite recent project to work on? Why?
- Do you have experience in this industry?

07. Make the offer

Once you’ve decided on the freelancer you want to work with, if hiring through a platform then it will take care of the contract, and in some cases you’ll be asked to deposit funds which are released when pre-agreed milestones are reached. Otherwise you’ll pay upon completion.

Important!

Some freelancing platforms won’t include things like Non-Disclosure-Agreements or pricing for work that comes up outside of the original scope. Check the contracts that are in place to ensure you’re covered where you need to be.

“Clients do not come first. Employees come first. If you take care of your employees, they will take care of the clients.”

Sir Richard Branson

09.

Building a purposeful team

Your purpose is why your company exists, and what drives its mission and values. As we discovered in an earlier guide, your purpose is what defines you, not just your brand but how you do business as a whole. It will also be one of the reasons you and your team come to work every day. To thrive in 2023, startups and scaleups need to create purposeful workplaces where team members can feel empowered, inspired by a mission bigger than just making money, and fostered in a sense of togetherness.

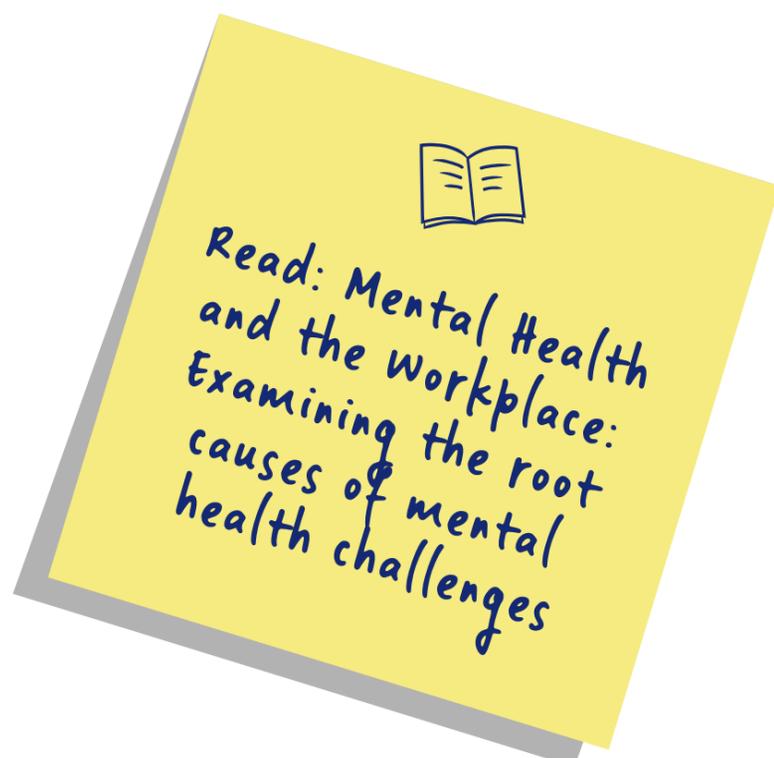
According to research by Gallup, a sense of belonging is essential for success—both the employee's and the company's. "Our best selves emerge when we have experiences that connect us and create a sense of belonging". Here are some ways to bring your purpose to life for your teams:

Regularly communicate your purpose

Having a powerful vision and mission statement is important for startups to your purpose for your teams, but that's only half the job. The hard part is making sure employees understand the story behind your journey as a founder, and how your company's purpose came to be. This can help your teams find the purpose in their role, and can also help prospective job candidates to see if the job is a good fit for them or not.

With support and care, your teams can clearly define the kind of success they want to achieve and the type of environment that fosters it—as well as how they can get the most out of their abilities.

It can be helpful to re-communicate your company's purpose to your teams, especially as they grow, to keep everyone on the right track. Here are some steps you can take to help reiterate your purpose to your teams:



- Using it to make and explain the decisions the team makes
- Referring to it frequently at meetings and presentations
- Using it to help decide where the team spends time and energy

Live your values through your workplace policies

Purpose doesn't just inform your business decisions, it can help define the workplace experience for your teams. From your HR policies through to your office's carbon footprint, there are a lots of ways to help create policies which bring your startup's purpose to life at work.



Listen to your teams

To truly create a purposeful culture, engage your teams in creating what that means for them together.

By creating space to listen to them either through 1-2-1s, Town Hall meetings or interactive workshops, your teams will feel a sense of ownership over workplace culture and practices, and studies repeatedly show that when people feel a sense of ownership and belonging, they will stay longer and lead more fulfilled working lives.

Maintain sustainable workplaces and work practices

How we respond to climate change as founders will come to define our approach to business moving forward, and change starts with you. By having clearly defined and communicated sustainability practices, you not only do your part towards reducing carbon footprint and waste, but also provide another reason for potential new employees to be attracted to your startup. Here are few ways startups can practice sustainability:

Supply chains

Having a commitment to the environment in your startup is just the first step. Can you select suppliers and partners in your supply chain that match your commitment to sustainability?

Greener sites

If your team is fully remote with no physical site, you're avoiding one of your largest omitters of carbon. However, for many this isn't possible, maybe you have a production facility, a shop or a studio. As energy costs rise, consider how you can use renewable energy sources, including selecting the right supplier.

Waste reduction

Encourage your teams to reduce waste, whether that's how your company uses plastics and paper, through to energy usage and waste. By embracing the principles of circular economy, and focussing on refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle and recovery, you can help people in your startup make the right choices. And remember, leading by example helps set the right course of action.

Travel

Remote working has never been more accessible to so many startups, so where possible, reduce the amount of unnecessary business travel, and where possible, use trains and even your bike. Develop a travel policy in your startup to help colleagues make informed decisions about travel.

Empower your people and teams

The more connected your teams feel to your startup's purpose, the happier they'll feel, the longer they'll stay in the role, and the better placed they'll be to achieve your company's business goals.

Statistics show employees report "1.7 times higher job satisfaction" and "1.4 times more engagement" at work. Furthermore, according to LinkedIn's Purpose at Work Global Report, 73% of professionals who identify as purpose-driven are satisfied with their jobs.

Ask these five questions to help foster a sense of purpose in your colleagues:

- What are you good at?
- What do you enjoy?
- What feels most useful?
- What creates a sense of forward momentum?
- How do you relate to others?
- How does your role connect to our overall purpose?

These questions are all meant to connect employees with their own sense of purpose, as well as to their purpose as it relates to their workplace.

Focus on wellbeing

Overall wellness means having all of your employee's needs met; emotional, financial and physical, and wellbeing has never been a more important signifier of whether an employee is satisfied at work. As a member of your team, it's important to consider each employee's personal context to help provide a supportive environment in which they can thrive.

Whether it's paid time off to volunteer, encouraging time for physical activity during the working day, offering fair salaries and making time for team socials, ensuring your team's wellbeing is being looked after will help build a stronger startup.

Did you know?

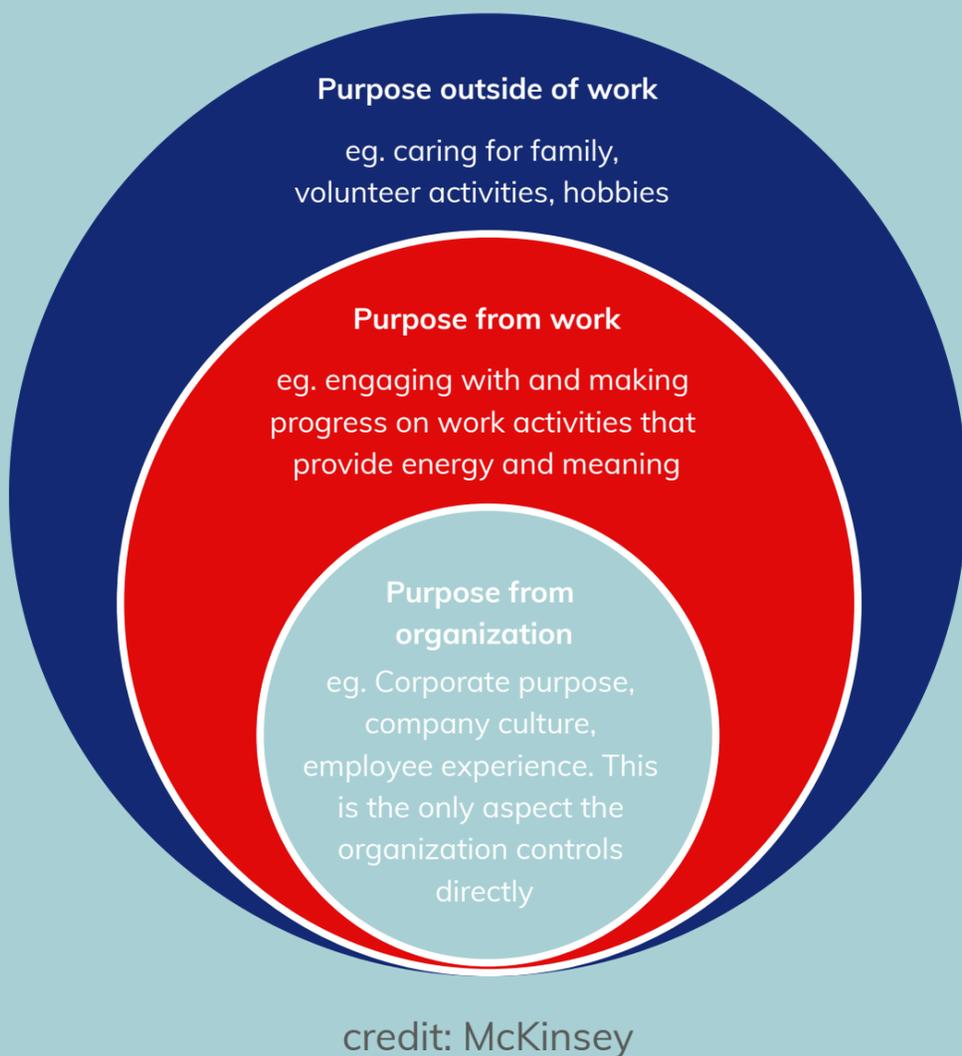
A study by LinkedIn showed employees perform better across the board, stay loyal to their organisations, rise to senior-level roles, turn into their organisation's net promoters and build camaraderie that lasts outside of working hours.



employees in the UK have experienced mental health issues due to work or where work was a related factor
Source: *Business in the community*

Most employees where they are to help them achieve fulfillment at work

The relationship between individual purpose and work



Use great technology

There's lots of tech to help you build a strong team culture and improve how you manage your teams.



HR - from onboarding new hires, to managing team holidays and secure contracts, check out [Charlie HR](#)



Payroll - you've probably got accountancy software set up, and many have payroll functions built in, like [Xero](#) and [QuickBooks](#). Check out our [Guide on managing your finances](#) for more.



Communications - a cornerstone of any startup's tech stack, there are many popular apps to choose from like [Slack](#), [Teams](#) and [Discord](#). All offer similar features, and Slack has a good free tier for startups.



Perks - if you want to offer rewards and delightful surprises for your employees, check out sites like [Perkbox](#) who help your teams access 4,000 perks and discounts.

08.

A Life More Virgin: How Virgin Money bring purpose to life



Virgin Money's purpose of Making You Happier About Money has enabled them to reimagine how they work, to say goodbye to traditional working conventions that don't reflect the world we live in today, and help their teams and customers live their best life. We spoke to Suzanne Smith, Senior Manager, Purpose and Community, about their purpose and what living a 'Life More Virgin' means for her colleagues.

What does your job at Virgin Money entail, and why do you enjoy it?

Our team focuses on the activation of our purpose 'Making You Happier About Money' and delivering on our Community Strategy. We work with leaders and colleagues across Virgin Money to empower them to use our purpose to push boundaries, and remove barriers that get in the way of delivering positive outcomes for our customers, colleagues and our communities. I lead a team called the Purpose Squad who work with specific areas of the business on their challenges and identify ways to improve ways of working and processes. In the community team we lead on our Make £5 Grow entrepreneurial schools programme, our charity partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support and Volunteering.

I believe purpose can allow us to constructively challenge ourselves, and one another, to create greater impact for all our stakeholders, whilst building a workplace and culture that enables colleagues to live their best lives. I feel so grateful to have a role that focuses on driving and influencing positive change!

How Virgin Money helps its teams live a Life More Virgin:

- 30 days annual leave for all colleagues, plus bank holidays
- Gender neutral family leave, including 20 weeks paid leave for expectant parents and those looking to adopt
- Five extra paid wellbeing days per year

Can you please tell us about A Life More Virgin? What does it mean for people working at Virgin Money? How does it impact their working weeks?

Our research shows that flexible working has the potential to help our colleagues live their best lives, whilst building a workforce that better reflects the communities we serve. Making You Happier About Money is about being bold, inclusive and progressive and this played a fundamental role as we developed A Life More Virgin, a working model that puts colleague wellbeing front and centre.

In practice, this means a significant proportion of our workforce have moved away from full-time nine-to-five patterns in the office. Instead, colleagues have the freedom to work remotely, using our offices and Stores as hubs for collaboration and innovation.

“Every colleague and team has the opportunity to develop a working pattern and team rhythm that best serves their personal needs, and the needs of our customers.”

We also know that to make this a success, we need to face into the potential challenges of a more flexible working environment, with strong focus on wellbeing, inclusion, career progression, creating the right environment, and giving colleagues the tools they need to do their job well.

Why do you think A Life More Virgin has been received so well? What positive difference has it made to you personally?

For me, A Life More Virgin is a game-changer and offers colleagues greater autonomy to balance their work and home life in a more manageable and sustainable way. We've heard some fantastic stories from colleagues across Virgin Money about how they can flex their time in a way that works for them, their teams, and their family. Sometimes it's about managing caring responsibilities, fitness or using wellbeing days for some digital detox but the best thing is it's not one size fits all!

For me personally, with four children and elderly parents life is never quiet! When I think back to days of being in the office every day and racing home to collect children on time - it fills me with dread! Most of the time I can now start work early, drop kids to any sports clubs (which previously was a challenge for them to attend), support any health appointments for parents all by flexing my time. And when face-to-face works better, I can collaborate with colleagues in the office. Overall I feel that I'm a better mum, daughter and I feel more productive at work.



For new founders just starting up who may not have the resources to be able to offer things like perks, fancy offices and bonuses, how do you think they can foster positive working cultures driven by common purpose?

Purpose has the power to change how people think, feel and act. By harnessing your purpose and involving those in your business to co-create it, you can unify people on why you exist as a business and the problems you are there to solve.

Providing a clear North Star gives people a sense of meaning and belonging.

08. A LIFE MORE VIRGIN

One of the most meaningful things you can do for your people is to create a culture empowered by:

- Creating personal ownership around purpose by helping colleagues connect their role to your purpose. Help them use purpose as a tool for constructive check-and-challenge (and an avenue for disruption).
- Ensuring colleagues' voices are heard and that you are listening and responding, will help your people feel valued. And it'll help them understand that they also have a role in driving and influencing positive change. Creating feedback loops so colleagues see the results of their input is essential.
- Communicating regularly with your team, so they have all the information they need to successfully work autonomously. I recently heard the phrase 'mushroom management' to describe when managers keep their teams in the dark rather than being transparent. In reality, this impacts the trust needed which is essential to empowerment. You can also bring your purpose to life through storytelling about decisions that have been made, or things you have stopped doing because of your purpose.
- Giving colleagues greater autonomy about where, when and how they work can have a hugely positive impact on wellbeing and productivity. The key to success with this is maximising individual choice, and not creating a 'one size fits all' approach.





About this Guide

This Guide was produced for Virgin StartUp by [Goldfish](#), with contributions from:
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