The Covid Class of 2021 Has Unique Strengths and Weaknesses. Employers Should Be Prepared

A year of studying and working remotely forced many 2021 college graduates to practice certain skills that employers could have never foreseen needing. While some companies have already made remote work a permanent part of their business models, they're still figuring out how to make these young adults feel like they belong. Here's what the experts say.

Jennifer Deal, who has written extensively about the new workplace, said she recently spoke to a group of new college hires this year, who are eager to share what they learned but nervous about how their people work together. While young people need in-person opportunities to effectively learn what guardrails they need to be productive.

"It can be stressful and potentially overwhelming for them to have to make this transition and to have to relearn the smell test. Making that argument now might seem silly—or controlling—to many of them. But the argument that people can’t be successful in the workplace without being productive, collaborative, and accountable is not one that can be made lightly.

Managing Your Own Money

Jennifer Deal

"It’s harder for those who have had the chance to learn who to ask for help and where to look for information—" as the pandemic forced many young adults to practice certain skills that employers couldn’t have imagined earlier this year.

The University of Southern California. She is co-author of “What Millennials Want from Work.”

John Paller

"It’s true that young people need to learn how to be part of an organization as they step into the professional work setting. Those who struggled to manage their time without those supports. Those who succeeded gained skills many older employees are still trying to learn.

"Stressful Times, it Often Backfires

Relate to Employees During

Become Next Geopolitical Weapon

"The strategy of trying to infuse more innovation into the workplace, which was so successful during the pandemic, might be hard to convince recent grads face to face again—especially young people—it changed their expectations about work. Those who use those strategies might be more appealing.

"When thinking about how to integrate new hires this year, companies also should think about what policies and programs they can put in place to help recent grads gain the implicit knowledge they lack, while leveraging the different strengths and developmental needs than the new grads who joined their companies during the pandemic.

"On the positive side, the pandemic forced many young adults to practice certain skills that employers could have never foreseen needing. While some companies have already made remote work a permanent part of their business models, they’re still figuring out how to make these young adults feel like they belong. Here’s what the experts say.

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