Recruiting and onboarding new talent, despite the lockdown…

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Since the beginning of March 2020 and following the announcement of the Government imposed lockdown to limit the spread of COVID19, our working lives has suddenly been strongly impacted in its practices. Our working practices have been disrupted, our methods have had to change. All organization needed to urgently organize, introduce, and implement teleworking to ensure that the risk of contamination was minimized to control the virus.

As a CHO, I was immediately faced with ponderings several key questions:

How can we adapt our working methods quickly and efficiently?
How can we keep all our growing teams connected and motivated?
How can we optimize the recruitment and onboarding of new talent during the lockdown?

To answer these questions, I first took a step back and looked pragmatically at the challenge ahead :
Within Arcad Software, we are fortunate to work in a company at the cutting edge of IT, and we could therefore very easily switch all our key "value-add" activities to a digital method of working right from the start of lockdown across all our teams, and each of our global offices which are strategically located across the planet.
In addition, the ongoing growth of ARCAD's business allowed us not only to retain our entire workforce, but more importantly, to continue to strengthen our teams by bringing onboard some of the best available talent.

How to remain effective in this context ?

To remain effective and maintain our good recruitment and integration practices, we had to get innovative !

To maintain the pace of our ongoing recruitment of the best developers, engineers, marketeers and salespeople needed, we needed to analyze and optimize the whole process quickly.
Every step has now been finely tuned : from early candidate identification, 1st stage interviews, to finalizing recruitment, to integration…

Some changes were easier to implement, such as equipping the new recruits with the required IT hardware , whilst others required more delicate optimization, but each change has delivered necessary changes, and each has contributed to the ongoing success of both HR but also our organization.

What was the challenge?

In my role as CHO and as part of the HR department, I was keen to embrace this specific challenge.

It consisted of maintaining **the pre-lockdown atmosphere** and culture with the existing employees whilst simultaneously integrating and **developing close contact with our new employees**, even informally and despite the necessity for home working.

How can HR optimize their practices?

ARCAD quickly and efficiently optimized our HR practices; **to integrate our new employees as best as we could, to quickly put them in touch with other relevant team members, to maintain the teams' cohesion and to create a convivial work atmosphere regardless of the distance challenges**

For example, the HR department decided to divide up the previous on-boarding sessions, with the first day spent on site to collect the equipment package and take advantage of this moment to allow the new employee to discover his future workspace and have a first face-to-face (socially distanced and masked of course) conversation with their new 1st line manager.

Following this, a **custom integration schedule** was created for each of our new-hires with a series of **virtual meetings conducted every day** during the first few weeks to integrate them into the projects they are will be working on and introduce them to the other members of their team. Step by Step, they were then also introduced to the other members of the company. Right from the start it was important to us that these valuable Working links were established, regardless of remote working imperatives.

Our Human Resources Manager, Mrs. Ségolène Kernevez, commented:

SEGOLENE KERNEVEZ
HR MANAGER

"Indeed, this period was also full of learning and enrichment for me. The lockdown gave me the chance, as a recruiter, to be able to continue to offer job opportunities. It is true that the impact on our networks was very positive from the point of view of our employer brand and very favorable for our recruitments: the candidates were very attentive, available, motivated and involved in the process, and above all they were reassured to see that they were applying to a company that was thriving under difficult economic conditions.
My challenge as Human Resources Manager was to create remote contact from the very first interaction, and to succeed in transferring our corporate values and culture without being able to welcome these candidates into their future working environment. We were able to pass on detail of our expectations of their work using practical and relevant examples, to enable candidates to project themselves into the Arcad working environment!

I also had to adapt my recruitment practices, especially during video interviews, and describe our working practices. The numerous interactions with managers during the recruitment process, and the use of video technology to conduct interviews with our team directly from the ARCAD career page were a significant help in giving candidates a good first impression of their colleagues! I am very excited about the day when we can finally welcome our new recruits to finally

discover the friendliness of the Arcadians and enjoy the magnificent views of our beautiful mountains from our office location! »

What were the right tools to put in place?

I also had to come up with more informal ideas to keep the Arcad spirit and encourage the agility and conviviality that are a key part of ARCAD's culture and DNA.

We were lucky enough to be able to rely on the "**Teams**" tool that was set up by our internal IT team and which I must admit was an essential support in this stage. Quickly taken in hand by the teams, it made it possible to encourage video exchanges and to maintain effective communication during the various meetings, whether it was one-to-one, during the weekly meetings of each team, or even during the quarterly "e-general meeting" with all the employees worldwide... Not forgetting the 100% digital video training sessions to continue to improve our employee's skills.
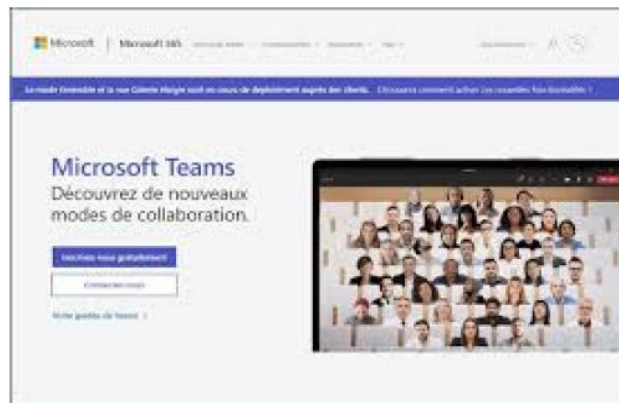
This tool was the first technology we introduced to ensure the smooth running of the company.
The entire administrative part has been complemented using tools such as **DocuSign** for signing documents, but also thanks to the **electronic safes** that we set up earlier in 2020.

As the CHO within Arcad Software, I was part of the project team that worked on the creation of our intranet site and this allowed me to work on the creation of an **internal social media portal: Arcad Social Media**, which is accessible to all our employees to help with collaboration. The Portal is an interactive and corporate communication space, created with the simple goal of keeping all employees around the world connected and giving them opportunity to share each of their news.

Thanks to this tool and a bit of imagination, I was able to launch internal events within the company such as challenges like the "Positive Thought Challenge" with the objective of starting the day well, keeping the mood of employees up and maintaining the positive working environment.

Every day, for 4 weeks, employees posted positive quotes which they were keen to share with each other. Most employees actively participated, which created a new channel of communication and fostered a culture of digital exchanges using Social Media concepts.

This tool was also beneficial for sharing information and thus promoting the **discovery of our different cultures**. As our company is completely international by the nature of our work with customers (a large percentage of whom are also operating globally), we were fortunate to have our Indian team share their photos of their Festival of Lights: Diwali, via this channel. In response, we have published photos, videos, DIY, music related to Christmas so that we can both learn about each other's culture and customs.

Sharing of photos during the confinement took place: conversations, comments and even jokes. A more spontaneous and liberated communication process was born, which gave rise to some great initiatives launched by the staff themselves:

- **Morning coffee via Teams:** Employees voluntarily logged on during a specific period to exchange ideas and get their day off to a good start. This made it possible to maintain the ritual of the morning coffee break and to retain a convivial atmosphere between colleagues.

- **The Mug Coffee challenge:** Employees posted a photo of a coffee break moment with their own personal mug they use at home.
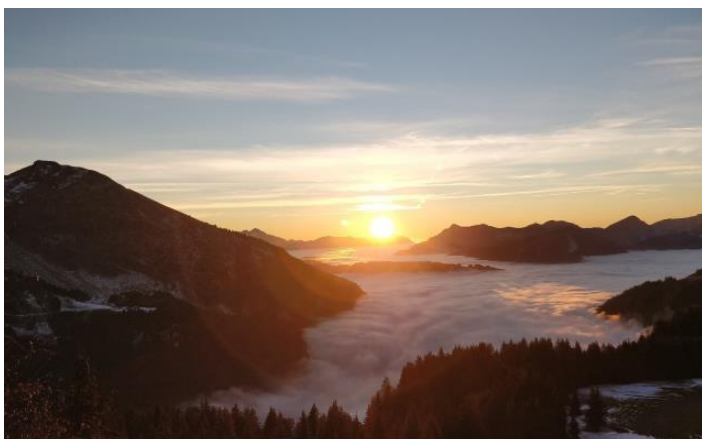
Our employee representatives played an important role during the end of the year as well. Every year we used to organize an annual Christmas party at our Annecy office. Despite the health crisis and for the benefit of the employees, the representatives wanted to keep this ritual going to ensure the joy, magic, and social side of Christmas. The representatives also had to adapt by organizing **a totally digital festive event**, in the form of a musical blind test, and by announcing the results of a photo competition launched on their platform portal with an autumnal theme.

How was management's involvement essential during this period?

All these initiatives and ideas were made possible thanks to the involvement of Arcad Software's management. The Strategic Committee and ARCAD management immediately understood the importance of showing their empathy and flexibility during this period. Each contributed to helping and when possible solving any personal problems of individual employees. The HR team was also keen to be present and to listen to the employees, to provide them with guidance and support, and above all to put in place the necessary measures to help and support them in any possible way.

What were your key achievements by the end of this period ?

This period, although very special, has been very rewarding for me in my role as a CHO. In my opinion, Arcad Software has adapted and has quickly and efficiently made all the necessary changes to make its on-boarding and integration process as pleasant as we possibly could. Each and every Arcadian has participated in this transformation, each at their own level to keep the momentum going.

For myself, I feel very privileged to be part of such a dynamic, agile, and constantly evolving organization, which allows us, even during the pandemic to continue to recruit new talent while keeping the ARCAD culture and values in place.

If you would like to join us, please consult our "open positions" page of our website.
https://www.arcadsoftware.com/about/job-offers

Jéromine Miette
CHO at Arcad Software