

## New Beginnings in a New Normal

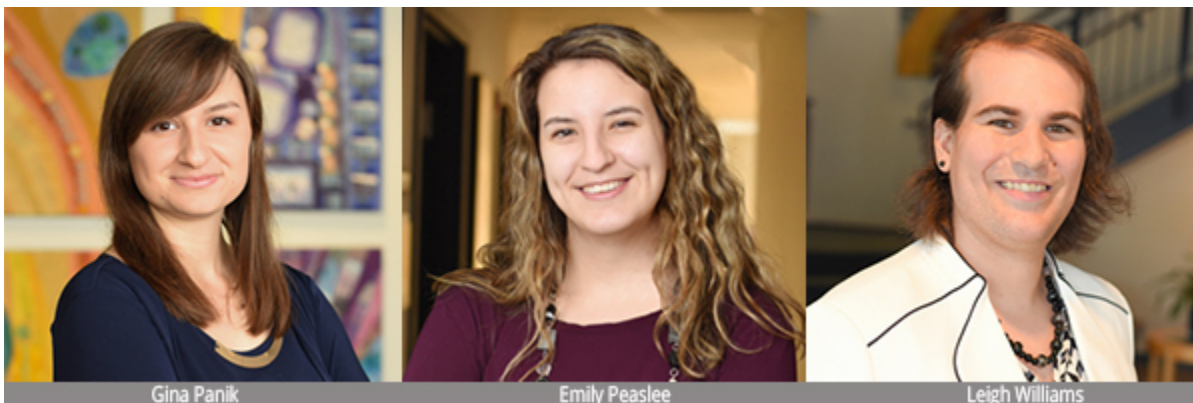
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While business practices have had to change with the emergence of COVID-19, companies have adjusted and kept moving forward, and hiring and on-boarding has continued.

For this month's blog, I spoke with a handful of Sanborn Head's recent COVID-era hires about their experiences with job hunting and on-boarding during a pandemic.

- Gina Panik, Engineer
- Emily Peaslee, Senior Accounting Coordinator
- Leigh Williams, EIT, Project Engineer



### How far into the COVID-19 pandemic were you hired?

**GP:** I started right at the beginning of the stay-at-home order for New Hampshire. My start date was postponed because of the shift to working from home.

**EP:** I was hired at the end of October – so several months into the pandemic.

**LW:** I was hired about 3-4 months into the pandemic.

### What was your job hunt like? Did it take place entirely during the pandemic?

**GP:** Mine was almost entirely pandemic-free – I started looking for jobs as early as August 2019 while still in school.

**EP:** My job hunt started in March 2020 just before the COVID lockdowns went into effect. I graduated in May and did not stop looking throughout that time.

**LW:** The company I had previously worked for quickly utilized furloughs, and within the first month of COVID they were talking layoffs. I have been in the industry for a while and have many industry contacts. When I started looking, I utilized headhunters and my contacts to get me into

various interviews. It took about a month for interviews to come together.

**Did you have any assumptions/expectations about what starting a new job remotely would be like?**

**GP:** I had absolutely no idea what to expect! I had never worked a full-time job before; I came to Sanborn Head straight out of college.

**EP:** I was unsure about working from home because I had never had that opportunity before. I didn't think that it would work for me, but I made the best of it and now I actually prefer being at home.

**LW:** I was excited to work remotely, getting my tasks and completing them in the warmth and comfort of my own home. Because the work wasn't new to me and my master's courses were already remote, my expectation was that the social component would be lost but the work would be easier to perform. So, while I struggled with the 'who' of the company, the 'what' is the same.

**How did you complete your on-boarding/training? Was it entirely remote?**

**GP:** Most of my on-boarding was conducted from home. I started fieldwork training during my second week, which I continued to do throughout the extent of the stay-at-home order.

**EP:** My training was entirely in-person. I was in the office for three weeks with just one other person with me at a time.

**LW:** Mostly remote, but in-person for new hire paperwork. I was remote from day one for the day-to-day work.

**What has been the most difficult thing about starting a new job during a pandemic?**

**GP:** The most difficult part for me has been learning the norms of working and of Sanborn Head as a company. Having no full-time experience, and no experience at all in consulting, I knew very little about the norms of office work, billable hours, fieldwork, and the like.

**EP:** With most people working from home, it's been difficult to meet and make real connections with coworkers.

**LW:** Socialization. I enjoy learning about people via face-to-face conversations. Being remote has hindered the human side of how coworkers bond.

**How has your EDGE leader helped you transition into your new job?**

**GP:** My EDGE leader helped me transition into my job by always being happy to answer my questions – of which I had many during my on-boarding.

**EP:** My EDGE leader has helped me with training and has been able to make a smooth transition from working in the office to working from home for the first time.

**LW:** My EDGE leader is wonderful. He asked for what would make me successful, then simply did it. I think we lucked out being paired together as we are similar in how we approach work and I prefer his management style.

**What has helped you feel more connected to your coworkers/the company since you've been hired?**

**GP:** MS Team meetings, facilitated by my EDGE leader, have been a huge factor in making me feel more connected with my coworkers and company. In these weekly meetings, my direct team meet to discuss both life and work. It's a short, stress-free meeting, and an opportunity to learn about some of my coworkers and what they do in their spare time.

**EP:** MS Teams calls have given me a chance to see and talk with coworkers. My department has two weekly Teams meetings/check-ins, which have helped me feel more comfortable and to get to know everyone.

**LW:** I enjoy the events the company plans. I talk with people on the phone and in meetings to discuss personal things and build rapport. I talk

shop with those that I pass on-site or in the equipment room. I make those interactions a priority because I understand their importance. The work is the work. The people are why you stay.