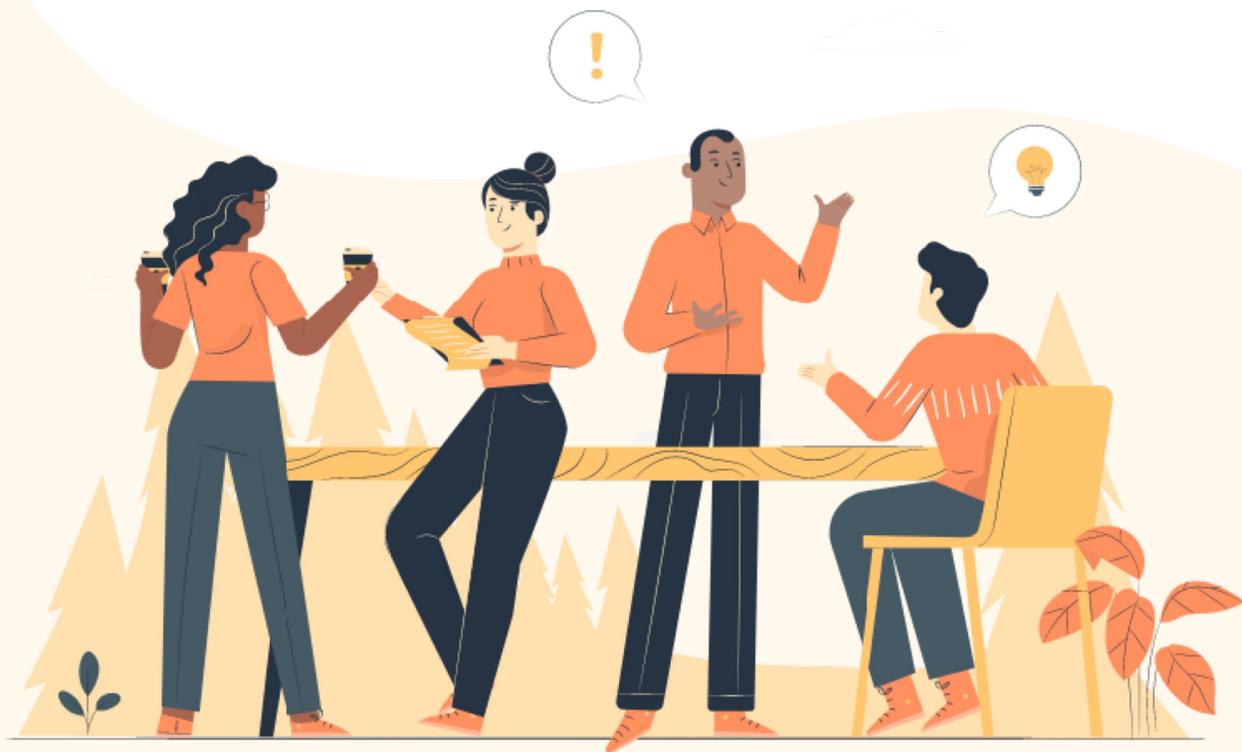


Why Cognito Chose To Use Offsite For Two Separate Retreats In 2021 As A Fully-Distributed Team

To learn more, please visit joinoffsite.com



Our Client

Cognito builds ID verification services and APIs to help businesses make sure customers are who they claim to be securely and easily. They are the first company to provide comprehensive online identity verification of global customers without any code. Cognito's customizable drop-in ID verification and compliance system is based on hundreds of worldwide data sources and analyzes thousands of document types.

Until Cognito, businesses had to rely on using multiple solutions to do complete online verification of global customers. Now, you can get the full stack of online verification of business customers, including passport and driver's license verifications, liveness checks, risk flags, and more. Visit their website at www.cognitoHQ.com

- **July 6-10, 2021 | Redwood, CA**
- **September 13-16, 2021 | Miami, FL**

Benefits

- **Planned two Offsites for Cognito in 2021 (including a Sales Team meeting and an All-Hands retreat)**
- **Removed the stress of planning from the President and COO**
- **Provided a detailed agenda that contributed to high ROI for the All-Hands retreat**
- **Fielded questions from vendors and employee before, during, and after the Offsites**
- **Increased confidence from the team in company's future post-Offsite**

The Benefits Of Running A Fully-Distributed Company

Even before COVID-19, Cognito was a fully-distributed team.

They provided employees with autonomy regarding where they lived, when they wished to travel, and how they wanted to work.

The benefits were obvious.

Cognito was able to cut down on overhead without having office space and chooses instead to reinvest those funds into reimbursed lunches and other benefits that go directly to employees.

Additionally, being a distributed team allows Cognito the ability to recruit based on talent instead of location, while offering talented people the flexibility to work in ways that meet their lifestyle needs.

During the pandemic, it became impossible for team members to reconnect in-person, and as Cognito hired more employees through 2020 and 2021, there were a lot of people that had not met each other in-person before.

Cognito had held one Offsite in 2019, and felt it was time for more team retreats once everyone felt safe traveling again.

Offsite Removes The Stress From Planning Team Retreats

Offsite assisted Cognito with two team retreats in 2021, including a smaller Sales Team retreat in the Bay Area and an All-Hands retreat in Miami.

For both, Offsite provided the team leaders with a customizable feedback form to send their colleagues to ask questions like, "Do you feel comfortable traveling to an Offsite?" and "Where would you like to travel for the upcoming retreat?"

For the All-Hands retreat, Cognito chose Miami because most team members had not traveled there previously, and those who had enjoyed themselves thoroughly.

"It was great to have added expertise in setting the agenda, helping make sure that activities went just long enough, but not too long.

We avoided a situation where people were distracted or started looking at work emails, and everyone was focused on getting to know everyone else on the team."

From Hotel Rooms To Meeting Space, Vendor Management, Customer Support, and More

Offsite was able to help with end-to-end retreat planning, from travel to hotel rooms and meeting space needs, as well as dinner reservations, activities, and more.

Additionally, Cognito had a dedicated point-of-contact at the hotel and meeting space, in addition to the Offsite client success team, whenever questions or issues arose before, during, and after the retreats.

For Chris, this took a lot of work off his plate, so he could focus on recruiting, hiring, onboarding, finances, and all other aspects of being the co-founder and COO of a high-growth startup.

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Admittedly, I get stressed out about this kind of stuff. I wanted everything to be perfect, but I didn't have the bandwidth [to plan these Offsites], nor did I want the stress of planning everything myself. Offsite helped remove the stress...of booking dinner reservations, splitting the group into smaller groups for meals, booking the art tour, and the boat tour. Within the working portion of the Offsite, we loved the help in planning engaging team-building exercises.



**- Christopher Morton
President and COO**



How Cognito Plans To Utilize Offsites In The Future

After the Offsite, employees at Cognito expressed interest in reconvening for All-Hands retreats every six months on average.

The sales team chose to meet in the Bay Area in part because they were onboarding multiple employees at once. Justin Goodkind, Director of Partnerships and Solutions, was able to walk his sales team through demos, scripts, FAQs, mock objection management, and more, all within the span of a few days in July in Redwood, CA.

There's simply no way Slack and other asynchronous tools can replace being able to read someone's body language, hang out with colleagues in-person, and bond over more personal connections like getting to see photos of someone's pets or children.

Nor can virtual onboarding replace high-touch training for new employees.

As Cognito grows, hosting Offsites will become a "best practice" for onboarding as a fully-distributed company.

Additionally, Cognito plans to use Offsites to continue deepening trust among team members, facilitating strategic planning, and invest in their employees.

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“After the All-Hands retreat, a lot of people told me they felt more connected to the team, the company, and our mission.

Part of that was just having everyone meet in-person, but also having a well thought-out agenda that didn't drag on too long and didn't focus too much on the day-to-day work we do.”

Christopher Morton, President and COO



Group photo from Cognito's All-Hands Meeting in Miami, FL.

offsite.

Offsite is the easiest way to plan, manage, and follow-up after team retreats.

They help you choose the perfect venue, plan a detailed agenda that increases employee engagement, and generate measurable ROI on your Offsites.

Their clients include VC-backed startups, Inc 5000 companies, and YC-backed teams.

To learn more, please visit: www.joinoffsite.com.

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