

HR Insights

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Participating in Virtual Career Fairs

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to cancel in-person recruiting events today and beyond. As a result, online job fairs—or virtual career fairs—are rising in popularity as organizers pivot for upcoming recruiting seasons. In general, virtual recruiting can expand the geographical reach of recruiting efforts and reach a broader and more diverse talent pool.

Many organizations have gone completely virtual as a result of the pandemic. Employers are shifting to communicating with candidates through personalized messages, virtual chats, webinars and video calls.

Making the Shift to Virtual

Recruitics, a recruitment marketing agency, explored how virtual recruiting practices are evolving during the coronavirus pandemic. According to the survey:

- 46% of employers are not using virtual hiring events.
- 45% of employers are using virtual interviewing more since the onset of the pandemic.
- 6% of employers reported steady use of virtual hiring events since before the pandemic.

Prior to the pandemic, and still today, cost has been one of the top motives for employers to hold virtual career fairs. Investment for in-person career fairs can add up once you account for registration fees, travel expenses, lost time from employees and in-booth marketing swag. The greatest benefit of virtual recruiting is the ability to develop a diverse pipeline of qualified candidates.

And during challenging and uncertain times, people may be looking closely at their life and job. That

means a greater percentage of the talent pool may be open to discussions about new opportunities.

University Candidates

Before the pandemic, many university recruiting strategies relied on visiting select campuses to recruit entry-level candidates. While it's been a great way to meet large quantities of candidates face-to-face, recruiters may be missing out on talented candidates at other universities that didn't make the shortlist. As many universities are integrating virtual learning, it's a great time to use that same approach for recruiting entry-level candidates. Virtual recruiting is an efficient way to broaden and diversify the recruitment reach for college students.

Virtual career fairs will likely be hosted by colleges, trade associations or other organizations. To make the most of a virtual career fair for recruiting entry-level candidates, consider recommending the following to career fair hosts or organizers:

- Online or video presentations
- Virtual company tours
- Interactive questionnaires about interests and experiences
- Resume uploaders
- One-on-one video chats with recruiters
- On-the-spot interviews via video



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If you're looking to heavily recruit for entry-level opportunities, consider hosting your own virtual career fair. Then you have control over all aspects and can take the lead on promotion to your target audience and desired geographic locations if it's important to be physically near an office or other workplace.

Non-university Candidates

Like real-world career fairs, the virtual event may be focused on a certain industry, profession, experience or geographic area. For recruiting mid-level and senior positions, apply similar virtual best practices as listed above for university recruiting.

As many employees are working remotely, it may be even easier for potential candidates to join a virtual event—and continue the screening process—during their normal workday.

Other Considerations

Virtual career fairs are the most well-known type of virtual recruitment event. However, as everyone is adapting to the new normal, webinars and virtual information sessions are also becoming popular and can be efficient recruiting methods. For example:

- **Webinars** could be company-hosted sessions to attract candidates who are interested in a specific industry or professional topic.
- **Virtual information sessions** are helpful during the recruitment stage when you're ready to accept resumes or interview applicants. This type of recruiting method would be effective in targeting prospective candidates who you want to apply, and introduce them to your organization. Strive for two-way communication by including the following:
 - Virtual company tours
 - Panel discussions with current employees
 - Live chat functionality

No matter the target audience, it's a good practice to record your sessions or webinars so prospective candidates can watch when their schedule allows. Candidates lose the real-time interaction by doing this, but they'll still get a feel for your company and current employees.

The success of any recruiting event—whether virtual or not—hinges on how well you promote it with the right people. Similar to in-person events, you'll want to partner with campus career centers, staffing agencies or similar organizations that can connect you with the target candidates. With most of life's aspects moving online, there will be many different channels and platforms to have your event listed on. When it comes to your owned channels, consider posting your virtual event on your website and social media channels—especially LinkedIn—or through email marketing efforts.

Virtual events can be a great way to source, engage and convert candidates in a post-coronavirus world. To learn more about virtual recruiting strategies, contact Toole Insurance today.