

The Campus Recruiting Team of the Future: Rethink, Reskill, Retool

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As a talent acquisition leader, you're tasked with ensuring the growth of a qualified, diverse workforce—not just this quarter but for years to come. Since March 2020, the cadence you relied on to flex your team's resources has unquestionably been disrupted.

Before COVID-19, you probably recruited from a core list of schools near your offices and budgeted for your team to travel on campus and attend career fairs in person. These traditional methods won't cut it today (but you didn't need us to tell you that).

As students and colleges embrace virtual, employers are discovering new ways to connect. With more than 1,600 Virtual Career Fairs happening on Handshake this fall, students agree that they offer a more comfortable experience, alongside added benefits like no crowds or long wait times to speak with a choice employer.

Companies winning the mindshare of qualified talent go beyond engagement at Virtual Career Fairs alone: technology and their teams fuel their shift to virtual. In this guide, we'll show you how to join this elite group of employers by repurposing your team to recruit the most qualified candidates entirely online.

1. Conduct an audit of your technology, team, and skill sets

Recruiting from home has accelerated technological adoption. When the pandemic subsides, it's unlikely that your processes will fully return to normal. In addition to auditing your team's skill sets, you'll need to optimize and consolidate your recruiting tech stack to be more effective in the coming years.

Begin by mapping your team's strengths and resources with your short- and long-term hiring goals.

If you used to recruit interns from Arizona State University, how will you recruit this cohort digitally? If employer branding is a top priority for you, do any of your reports have marketing experience? In the absence of in-person recruiting, what role can technology provide?

By conducting this internal recruiting audit, you'll be prepared to address any limiting gaps in your workforce.

2. Repurposing your recruiting team based on forecasted needs

Over the past several months, your company may have experienced hiring freezes, budget cuts, or a general apprehension around hiring the best talent without meeting in person.

Based on your team's strengths audit, which team members can fulfill virtual functions like hosting virtual events, virtual internships, or virtual onboarding? Who will need to be reskilled to fill new functions? What tools are needed to ensure your team is brought up to speed quickly and can scale these remote recruiting functions effectively?

To inspire your strategy, here are some ideas on how to repurpose team (and spark cross-functional partnerships) to support your virtual initiatives:

Hiring managers → digital ambassadors

Partner with hiring managers and department leads across the company that can offer candidates an inside look at your organization, potential career paths, and team outcomes.

Alumni ambassadors → Virtual Career Fair representatives

Students want to hear from people they relate to, like a fellow alumni or someone pursuing a career they aspire to. Invite alumni ambassadors to your Virtual Career Fairs where they can give students direct exposure to your company and culture.

Employer brand specialists → marketing team

Companies that aren't afraid to be empathetic and talk about pressing issues are seen as more transparent and supportive of their employees' wellbeing. Gen Z wants to hear about how your mission will positively impact their lives (and the world).

The reputation of your company's brand and employer brand are intertwined.

If you're short on employer branding experts, partner with marketing to elevate your brand. After all, what customers think of your values impact candidate perceptions and vice versa. A negative candidate experience could lead to less qualified employees running your business.



3. Communicating the benefits of reskilling your workforce

People typically want to know, “What’s in it for me?” Address this in your project charter by communicating the benefits of becoming an ambassador or encouraging your marketing team to help define your employer brand. Here are a few examples for inspiration:

Alumni Ambassadors

- ✓ Opportunity to mentor students
- ✓ Create connections with prospects
- ✓ Bring qualified colleagues into your company

Marketing Team

- ✓ Build brand awareness and reputation
- ✓ Avert negative customer experience
- ✓ Influence your online narrative

You’ll not only want to be clear with the ask and communicate the benefits, you’ll also want to **mention how you plan to reward and recognize participants.**

4. Consolidating your team’s tools and technology

With hundreds of recruiting solutions out there, it’s likely your team relies on multiple platforms to help you fulfill different stages of the hiring journey. Take advantage of this downturn to shave your budget by consolidating your tech stack.

Ask yourself: Which recruiting technology do we use, and what do they help my team do? Can any of these tools fulfill multiple recruiting activities? How frequently does my team use these tools? How much does each tool cost?

By conducting an audit of your existing tech stack, you'll be able to review the benefits of each platform and highlight the tools that'll help you do more with less. Once you've settled on a consolidated set of robust solutions, share your findings and reasoning for reallocating each. If you are implementing a new, comprehensive recruiting solution instead of siloed platforms, use this time to get alignment from your team.

If you rely on Handshakes to source from **7M+ active students across 1K+ partner universities**, you can now turn to that same platform to help you **engage, qualify, and attribute hiring**. This fall, consolidate your multiple tools into one with Handshake Premium:

- ✓ Get proactive talent recommendations with Candidate Hub
- ✓ Host and promote virtual events and virtual information sessions
- ✓ Personally invite students to your virtual events and fairs at scale
- ✓ Spotlight testimonials for each segment in your Employer Page
- ✓ Connect qualified candidates with alumni ambassadors
- ✓ Evaluate and qualify candidates directly in Handshake
- ✓ Attribute all hiring activity directly within your ATS
- ✓ Report on peer insights and team outcomes

Handshake Premium partners also receive a dedicated account management team to activate their team's success throughout every step of the recruiting process. And if you don't have all of your bases covered, our team of qualified early talent experts can fill the skills gap. Think of us as an extension of your team and your partner in virtual.

“In the last major market downturn, we made the decision to pull way back on hiring interns, and as a result, we have been challenged by a gap in our management pipeline. This challenge was exacerbated by our significant growth coming out of the recession. We are committed out the gate not to do that this time around. Handshake’s new solution provides us with the end-to-end workflow we need to engage early talent and manage them through every stage from initial contact to hiring.”

—Lauren Nunnally, Chief Talent Officer, Swinerton Builders

Closing thoughts

Companies have found reinvention in the midst of downturns, like Airbnb did following the Great Recession when people were looking to boost their income by becoming lucrative off of their homes. Use this moment to reinvent your team.

For talent acquisition leaders who see the value in recruiting early career talent, virtual recruiting is a big shift in the way you’ve traditionally approached your function. But just because the model has changed doesn’t mean your whole team has to. Remember to play into your team’s strengths and demonstrate the impact of bringing qualified, diverse candidates into your engaged talent pipeline.

Handshake, the largest early talent network, partners with your peers in recruiting, so there’s no reason to adopt virtual alone. We’re happy to share a few of our learnings with you. Let’s help you repurpose your team, consolidate technology, and create scalable engagement programs that fulfill your hiring needs for years to come.

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