



## Handshake's Guide to Hosting Virtual Recruiting Events

Spring is one of the busiest recruiting seasons of the year. With students and alumni gearing up for their first or second jobs this summer, employers typically take advantage of this time to head on campus and meet face-to-face with talent they want to get to know.

With schools and communities reducing in-person gatherings to help curb the spread of COVID-19, career fairs and on-campus events are notably getting cancelled, postponed, or going digital. Meanwhile, your hiring goals are left unchanged, leaving a gap between

how you traditionally recruit top talent and the roles you still need to fill.

Innovative employers have been relying on virtual events and digital engagement to help build their talent pipeline and nurture qualified candidates in the past. Now more than ever, it's critical for all employers to shift their on-campus approach to digital, and one of the most engaging avenues to pursue is virtual events.

Here's how to launch yours in four easy steps.

### 1. Consider the foundations of your virtual event

Virtual events are an impactful way for students to connect with the fabric of your brand: they give prospective employees the opportunity to ask live questions, see your offices, and interact with employees in the field first-hand (and in real time).

#### Set a goal

What's the desired outcome of your virtual event—is it to spread awareness, drive applicants, or both? Think through this process to determine your content, speakers, and promotional plan. Set goals for how many attendees you'd like at your first virtual event, then use that as a proxy to gauge success and traction on your future events.

#### Find your host(s)

Consider who will provide the most insight to your target audience—for students, a full panel of senior managers may not be as relatable as a panel of recently graduated alumni. Diverse talent will want to see diversity represented.

#### Plan your promotion

Tailor your first virtual event to a specific role or category. This will help narrow down your target audience and content to the specific needs of your talent segments.

**Tip: Learn how to craft a memorable message that drives students to your virtual events.**



## 2. Identify the type of virtual event you want to host



### AMA (Ask Me Anything)

AMAs are hosted by a recruiter or hiring manager as well as a moderator, and give students the opportunity to ask live questions about the interview process, hiring timelines, employer perks, career growth, and company culture. Come prepared with a list of FAQs to get the conversation started.



### Employee panel

Feature recent grads or alumni in your panels—students like to hear from people who are like them and have been through a similar journey. Have a moderator prepare pre-canned questions about their journey from college to career, experience at the organization, and what makes them excited about their work. This will stem a series of questions from students the panel can then answer.



### ERGs (Employee Resource Groups)

Leverage internal ERGs to show future employees how the company is committed to creating an inclusive workplace where each individual has a community to lean on.



### Office tour

If your office is open, highlight what a day in the life of an intern or new grad would be like. If your office is currently closed, share any videos you might have on YouTube that showcase everyday life. Show the fun aspects that make being in your office exciting and rewarding.

## 3. Explore where you want to host your live stream

Many of Handshake's employer partners leverage platforms such as WebEx, GotoMeeting, YouTube Live, Google Hangouts, and Zoom to host their virtual events. If you're just getting started, consider piloting your virtual event on free platforms like Facebook Live or Instagram TV.

## 4. Promote your virtual event to your target audience

This is arguably the most important step. After all, there's no point in planning an event if no one's invited to it. Plus, nearly 85% of students prefer live video over written content, so you already have these sentiments going for you.

### Send a 1:1 message on Handshake

Filter variables like skills and location interests from Handshake's pool of 6M active students to find the most qualified talent for your open roles, then reach out with a personalized message to invite them to your virtual event. Be specific in your outreach—students want to know why they'd be a good fit.

### Share your event on social media

Promote your event through your owned social media platforms, including those early talent frequents like Instagram. Keep in mind students will need a Handshake account to sign up, which ensures only followers with a ".edu" address attend.

### Follow up with engaged candidates

If you have a listserv of candidates who have demonstrated interest in keeping in touch from your previous events or digital efforts, be sure to include them in your outreach! They may be more interested in learning about your roles now.

**Tip: experts predict that 40% of RSVPs drop off, so invite 50 if you need 30.**



## General tips and best practices

Keep your events authentic—the less scripted the better. Students want to hear from current employees in a personalized and casual way. After all, displaying comradery and community with panels or office tours is a great way to recruit Gen Z authentically.

### Scheduling & timing considerations

- Tuesdays through Thursdays are the best days of the week to host a virtual event. If you are inviting students from around the country, consider hosting your event during a convenient time across time zones.
- Events should be a maximum of 45 minutes of content, followed by 15 minutes of QA to keep students alert and engaged.

### Setting up your technology systems

- Have a fellow employee login as an attendee about 20 minutes before your event to test and confirm your audio and video quality.
- Many livestream platforms let you download a CSV file so you can track the names and emails of your attendees; confirm yours does as well.

### Engaging candidates during your event

- Chat questions—just like live questions—are a great indicator of a candidate's interest. Ensure there's a moderator alongside your host or co-hosts to help facilitate your virtual event conversations and troubleshoot tech.

### Follow up with your attendees and absentees

- Consider following up with everyone who RSVPed to your event with a call to action (i.e. what you want candidates to do after your event). We recommend sending separate follow ups to attendees and no shows.
- If you direct candidates to apply to a job, make sure you're including a source code so you can track candidates from attendee to hire. Tracking attendees through your hiring funnel is a great way to demonstrate the potential success of your virtual events to leadership.

### Reporting on your ROI

- Understand what touchpoints drove students to apply so you can repeat successes and learn and adjust your approach for next time.
- Virtual event attendees are leads just like students who stop by in-person at your career fair booth. Make sure you track who shows up or leverage Handshake's [Check-in Kiosk](#) to help do this for you.
- Treat your first few virtual events as an experiment! It may take one or two to find the best content and structure that works for your target audience.

**We hope you found this best practice guide useful in planning your next memorable virtual event. If you'd like to learn more about how to host your first virtual event and increase your messaging limits on Handshake, please reach out to our team by [requesting a demo](#).**