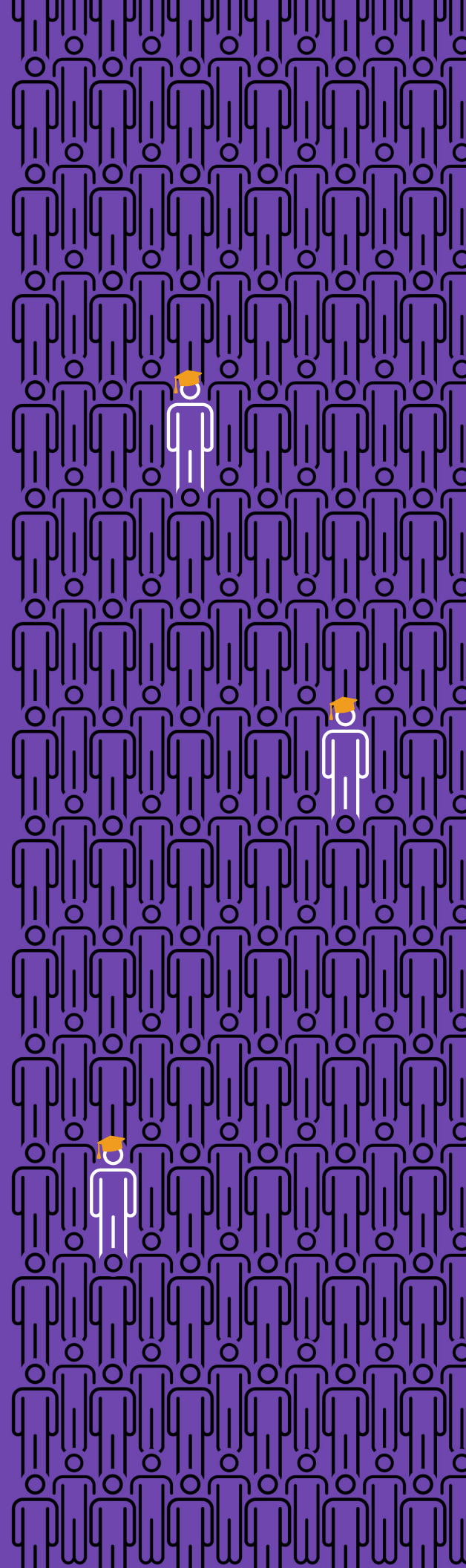


MONSTER

NEW GRAD HIRING GUIDE

College recruiting
after COVID-19

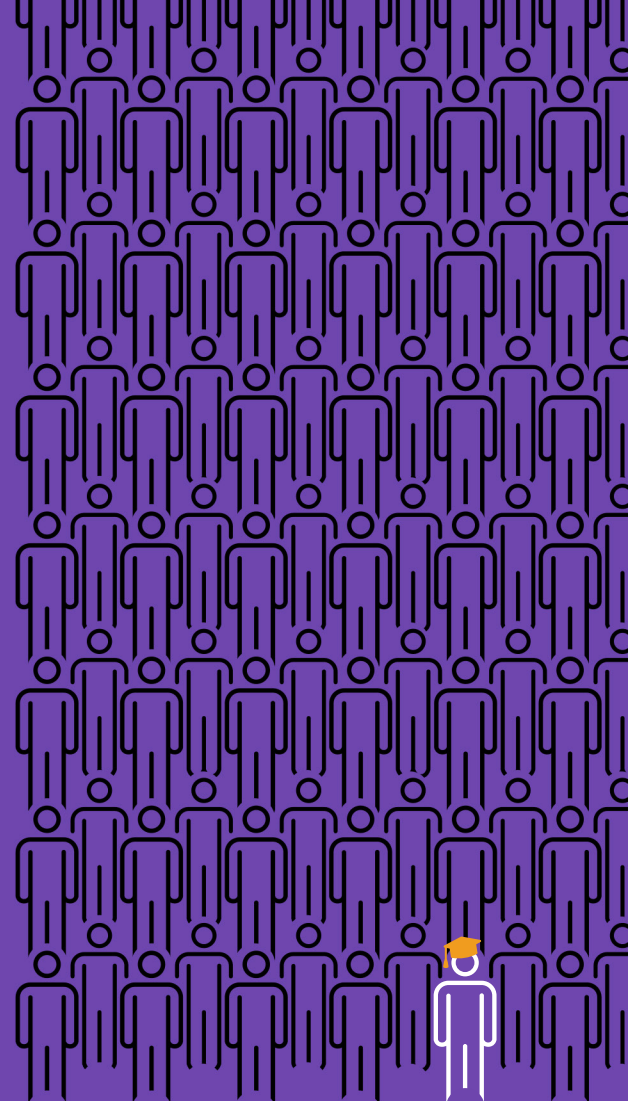


Under normal circumstances, hiring new graduates is an exciting time for recruitment pros. You get to meet with new talent, fresh into the workplace, full of the latest thoughts and ideas — as well as enthusiasm about starting their new post-college lives.

This year, however, it's a different story. Like last year, the class of 2021 will enter an uncertain job market, following a year where we experienced greater unemployment than we've seen since the 1930's.

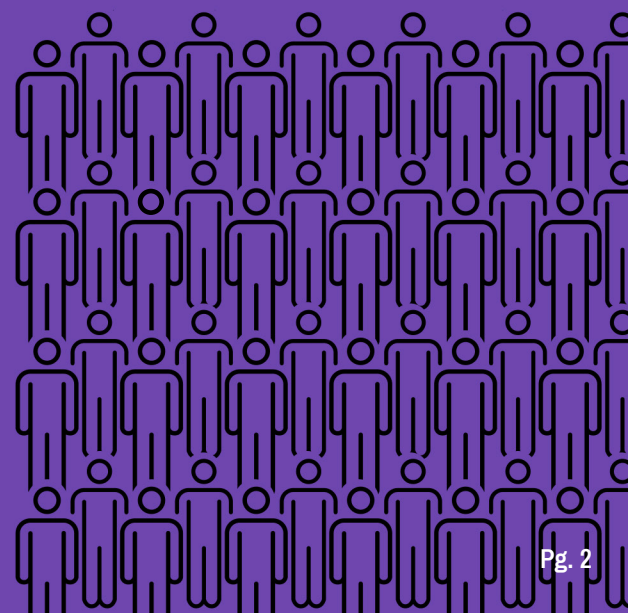
Instead of a dearth of talent, companies are faced with a glut of workers looking for a job, and 2021 graduates will be competing with them. According to recent Bureau of Labor statistics, the unemployment rate for young people (aged 16-24) is 11.5%, double that of the general population.

For members of the class of 2020 who received job offers, the numbers were down: The average entry-level starting salary was reported at \$54,585, down from \$56,155 in 2019, according to numbers from cloud recruiting platform iCIMS. About 1 in 20 companies pulled full-time offers they made to 2020 college seniors, according to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, and 19% were undecided. Twenty-two percent of companies revoked internship offers.



“There are a lot of changes,” says Rod Adams, U.S. talent acquisition leader for PwC. “I don’t even think we know all the ways it’s going to change at this point.”

This ebook was created to help companies navigate this uncertain landscape of recruiting new graduates during a pandemic. When even reaching and interviewing candidates is a challenge, companies are finding innovative ways to shift their recruiting strategies and emphasize new priorities. In this guide, you’ll find out what other companies are doing and how you can adapt your own practices for a new, socially distanced job economy.



Who is this new grad class?

First of all, just who are we talking about? Yes, they are recent college grads. (For the most part. More to come on that.)

But they're also Generation Z, and some of the first of that generation to graduate college.

According to Pew research, a member of Gen Z is any person born since 1997—there is no set end range yet for the group. As a generation, the oldest are turning 23 this year, so they're just beginning to infiltrate the workforce. They're new, they're excited to work—and they're now facing one of the strangest and toughest job markets in recent history.

This group is diverse—possibly the most diverse generation yet:

- 52% Caucasian
- 25% Hispanic
- 6% Asian

Gen Z are the first true digital natives, born after Google.

They're also diverse in terms of gender identity and acceptance of different gender identities: 59% of Gen Z say forms should include options other than “man” or “woman,” and 35% know someone who uses gender-neutral pronouns.

They have a short attention span—8 seconds, compared to 12 seconds for Millennials—and they'll be coming out of this strange college landscape with student debt. Although 2020 stats aren't in yet, 69% of the class of 2019 took out loans, with an average debt of \$29,900, according to Student Loan Hero.

Prior to COVID-19, two-thirds of new graduates had a side gig and 30% of them said they planned to keep the side gig after accepting something more permanent.

“It is too difficult to train at a distance. We are presently stalling any new internships.”

– Michael, Consulting, Enterprise, Northeast

“We have to hire our workforce back before going outside.”

– Seth, Hospitality, Staffing, West

How are companies recruiting in this landscape?

For companies preparing for 2021 hiring, it's still a time of flux, as the world returns to a "new normal." Many offices are still closed, as are some college campuses, so the old days of career fairs and super-sized company meet-and-greets are still on hold.

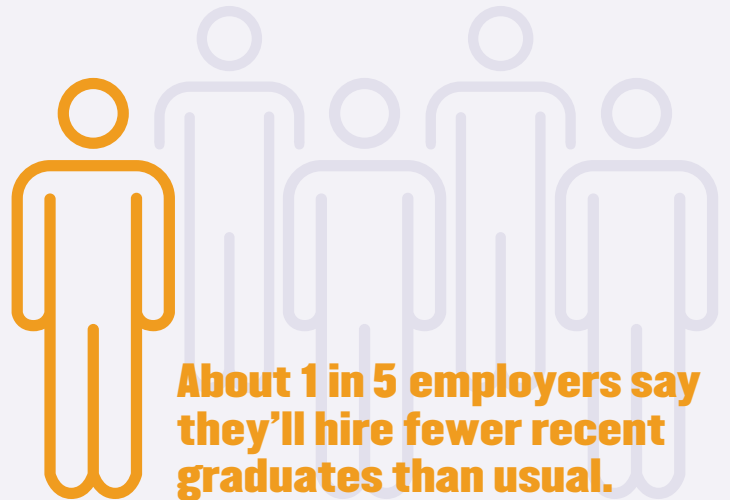
Here's how recruiters are putting their best foot forward in today's environment.

Virtual job fairs. Because colleges have such strict COVID-19 rules in place, many companies are participating in virtual job fairs and online events. "We probably had over 400 events on campus scheduled last March alone," says Natasha Stough, campus recruiting leader for EY (formerly Ernst & Young). "We had to pivot very quickly and shift a lot of those activities to a virtual format."

Webinars. Companies that would typically have "meet and greet" events to allow prospective new hires to see what they're all about have adopted new structures to allow job seekers to get information about the company and the culture. "We used to have info sessions, which were educational type programs to help people learn more about our business," Stough says. "We shifted those to a four-segment virtual experience."

Virtual interviews. After a year of virtual everything, companies are fully embracing the idea of virtual interviews. "As soon as the lockdown really took hold last year, we moved our interview model to virtual," says Ben Filteau, a human resources representative from Brooks Automation. "You want to be in person, but I think people understand that that's not possible right now. We're doing the best we can with the situation we're in."

Fluctuating start dates. Some companies were planning to bring new hires on as early as June, but with offices closed, many may not be able to make that happen. "We're trying to manage through how we work virtually and do things in a different way and bring in someone brand new to their career in that environment," Adams says. "It's challenging, and it's going to shift start dates a little bit."



About 1 in 5 employers say they'll hire fewer recent graduates than usual.

Virtual internships. In April, 83% of employers stated that they were making changes to their summer internship programs. For companies that can pull it off, thousands of new graduates (or next year's graduates) will participate in internships remotely this summer. "We've got about 3,500 interns that will be doing some type of virtual experience with us," Adams says. "It will be a shortened experience—they'll be starting in July versus June—but we're excited that we're still able to have an internship program to some degree."

Online on-boarding. Many companies with incoming hires have already made plans to bring them aboard digitally—no in-person HR meetings required. "I have a weekly meeting with IT and a few other players to make sure all the back-end logistics are ironed out," Filteau says. "Then every week, we set up a virtual meeting with the new hires to welcome them to the organization, conduct our orientation session, and they get up and running with managers from there."

THE CLASS OF 2021 AND THE JOB SEARCH

Monster's pre-COVID research revealed a group of confident, optimistic, digitally-savvy candidates:

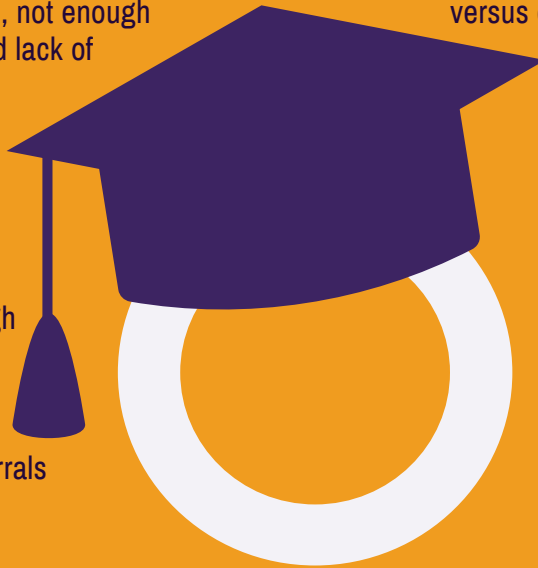
Gen Zers would quit their job in the next two years due to pay dissatisfaction, not enough advancement opportunities, and lack of development opportunities.

58% of Gen Zers check out social platforms when looking for work.

Gen Z is less likely to go through staffing firms or job boards for job opportunities, preferring company career websites, social networks, employee referrals and career fairs.

Gen Zers prefer YouTube, Instagram and Facebook versus other sites like LinkedIn and GlassDoor.

While grads might feel too educated for entry-level jobs, they admit they'd try something desperate if it takes too long to find work, such as applying to jobs they're overqualified for (63%), accepting lower salaries (56%), and even working for their parents (40%).



Post COVID-19:

We asked recent and impending college grads how they feel about their job prospects now, and they report feeling **sad, inconsequential, rudderless and disappointed** as they grapple with an uncertain future.

*Source: Monster C Space community insights
from w/o April 30, 2020*

What is the recruiter Gen Z experience?

Last year, in Monster's Global [State of the Recruiter Survey](#), we asked recruiters to share their experience trying to hire Gen Z:

- Recruiters say **email (40%)** and **social media (33%)** have been the most effective channels for communicating with Gen Z. North American recruiters are also likely to say that **text messaging** is effective.
- The biggest challenges cited by recruiters about Gen Z job seekers are **lack of experience** and finding qualified candidates.
- Gen Z candidates most often look for a **flexible schedule (42%)**, **career-development opportunities (36%)**, and **paid time off (27%)**.
- Gen Z candidates say that **work/life balance**, **growth opportunities** and **in-office perks** are important to them when it comes to company culture.

Where do you find them?

More grads entering the job market?

"In the past, a lot of young people immediately went to graduate school to pivot or to weather a recession, but the difference now is that graduate school is online," says Jill Tipograph, co-founder of Early Stage Careers, a career coaching service for young people.

"Do you, as a college grad, want to continue this distance learning with such a significant investment? Most likely no. The percent of grads who went that route are now going to be in the job market." That means that there's a mass of talent out there. Since they're competing with laid-off professionals with much more experience, many new grad candidates may be willing to expand a previously very targeted (read: "I want to work for Google") job search to smaller companies or related fields they may never have considered.

“**The percent of grads who went that route are now going to be in the job market.**”

That said, although there may be more candidates, it's still important to jump on the talent when you find it. "We've got a lot more unemployed individuals, but they're going to be just as selective in who they pick, and employers should be just as selective as well," says Luke Stratmann, metro market manager for Robert Half. "If you meet somebody that is 'the one,' don't second guess it."

If you can't hire these talented new grads at present, you can "keep them warm," so to speak, by maintaining contact with them and sending regular updates.

"A lot of recruiters will set reminders to reach out to candidates they don't have a spot for," says Tara Jalali, a recruiter with defense and government services contractor PAE. "They'll send an email or give them a short call with an update. Keeping up with them through a span of several months can help them feel like they're being supported, even if they don't work for us yet."

In 2016-2017,
of two million
bachelor's degrees,
more than half
were in these
5 fields:

1. Business _____ (381,000)
2. Health professions and related programs _____ (238,000)
3. Social sciences and history _____ (159,000)
4. Psychology _____ (117,000)
5. Biological and biomedical sciences _____ (117,000)

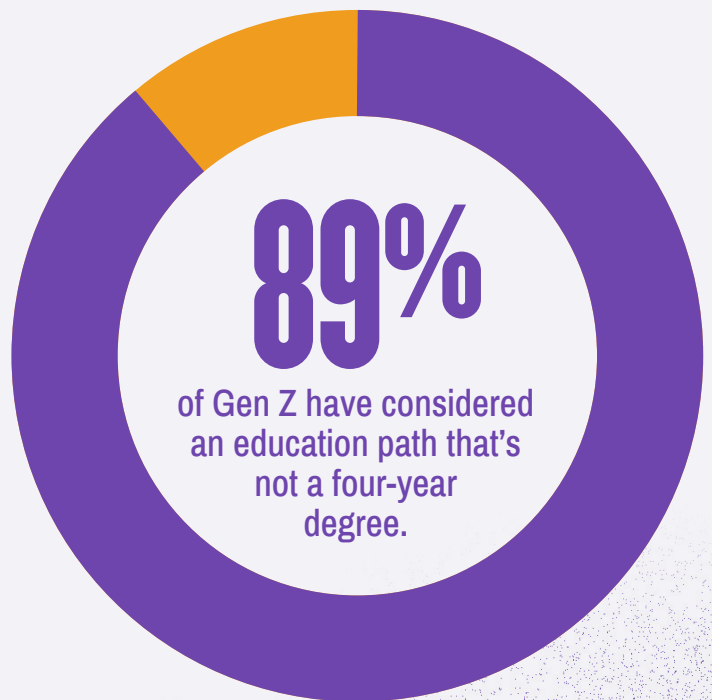
Source: National Center for Education Statistics

College versus non-college hiring

Current job prospects for non-degree candidates will depend on industry. For workers in the travel, tourism or entertainment fields, it's going to take longer for them to find new homes. "You're going to have fairly high unemployment for quite a while, and you're going to have more unskilled workers fighting for the same jobs, for less jobs than before," says Robert Newland, CEO of HR consulting firm Newland Associates.

That said, some industries are going to need non-degree labor—and a lot of it. As states ramp up testing and contact tracing, as well as vaccine distribution for instance, organizations are searching for thousands of essential workers to help. Workers are still needed to help process unemployment claims, loan applications, and to staff call centers.

"I think industries that maybe were only going to look at candidates with degrees are now widening their gaze a little bit and willing to look at associates or commensurate experience because they need [the help] now and it just doesn't exist," Stratmann says.



What are the best Gen Z recruiting practices?

Recruiting Gen Z during a pandemic requires the same kind of strategies that were necessary previously, with a few additions. “Their desires and wants and needs aren’t going to drastically change, so we’re still going to be focused on how we deliver those things in a more virtual way,” Adams says.

Be responsive. Now, more than ever, candidates want to hear back from you, even if you don’t have real news. “They just want an update,” Jalali says. “Even if you tell them, ‘I haven’t gotten a response yet’ or ‘I’m still waiting on feedback,’ they’re really flexible with those kinds of answers. They just want to know what’s happening.”

Make a connection. Continuity is also important. Candidates want to know that they made an impression and that you remember them. The way that we handle that is the recruiter they start with is the same recruiter who will follow them, all the way to the point of hire,” says Kurt Heissenbuttel, head of university talent and diversity recruitment for Fidelity Investments.

Be diversity & inclusion friendly. This is an incredibly diverse generation, and companies must embrace this ideology. “Our benefits today include families, no matter what that family is made up of,” Stough says. “We talk about the same leave for men as we do for women. It helps them identify what’s important to Ernst & Young and that we’re listening and that we care about this next generation of talent.”

Offer flexibility. Even pre-COVID, 91% of Gen Z workers thought employers should be more open to flexible employment arrangements, according to a [Randstad source](#). Now it’s a necessity. “Flexibility in how they work, having the ability to work virtually and having the technology to do that in a seamless way are important to the people we’ve been hiring,” Adams says.

Offer the potential for growth. This group of graduates cares a great deal about where their job is going to take them. Many of them want to know how a role is going to support their career growth. “We are finding for Gen Z particularly that we’re really having to highlight opportunities in the space of community engagement and personal growth and development as part of our offer,” Heissenbuttel says.

Use their friends. If you’re having trouble reaching this generation of job seekers, particularly without on-campus career fairs, use their friends. Ask last year’s graduate employees whether they know anyone who might be a good fit. “We are amplifying our message through our internal advocates—our employees—and leveraging our employee referral program,” says Roxanne Martinez, chief HR officer at oral health care company DentaQuest. “We’re making sure people are aware of its existence and the fact that we’re still committed to it.”

Be clear on your coronavirus plans. It’s important to let new grads know that you’re thinking about employee safety and how to respond to new protocols in the workplace. “We were very upfront with the folks we were recruiting that we may not have all of the answer, but we promise that we will overcommunicate, and that we’ll share information with them in real time, as decisions are being made,” Heissenbuttel says. “That becomes really important, given the current environment that we’re in.”

Emphasize job security. In these uncertain times, the ability to get and keep a job is important. “Job security is paramount to these young job seekers,” Tipograph says. “They don’t want to be laid off. They don’t want to be furloughed.” To the extent you can share with job seekers that your company is in a strong position, do so.

Show them the heart of the work. Although Gen Z is feeling anxious about the job market, they’re still looking for companies with a culture and a mission they can get on board with. “More than anything, they want the work to be meaningful,” Adams says.

How to communicate with Gen Z

This class of graduates is a highly digitally minded, tech-friendly group, and they appreciate quick hits and a modern approach. Here's how to grab and keep their attention.

Be up-to-date, technologically. Fifty-four percent of Gen Z candidates won't complete an application if your recruiting methods are outdated, and another 26% agree that a lack of technology throughout the hiring process would deter them from accepting a job.

Focus on mobile. Nearly half of Gen Zers have applied for a job or internship from a mobile device. Your site, your job application process, your presence in general should be viewable from an iPhone or Android. (Or any other non-laptop technology.)

Embrace video. Younger candidates expect to see video, whether it's in job ads, on the company website, or a chance to upload a video about themselves. "I think Gen Z, in particular, are really digital natives," Heissenbuttel says. "So using video becomes really important, not only in the interactive process, but also, how you showcase the role and the opportunity."

Text messaging is key. For Gen Z job seekers, shorter is better. "We continue to do a lot of our communication and outreach to them through text messaging," Heissenbuttel says. "That allows us to get out to them quickly, they respond quickly, and we're able to move the process along much faster that way."

6 out of 10 employers plan to recruit the class of 2021 at the same level as the class of 2020



Source: National Association of Colleges and Employers

Employer Branding

Now, more than ever, your reputation is a big deal. Take control with these tips:

Get your values out there.

A big majority of job candidates look for info on a company's values, culture or track record as they consider whether it's the right fit for them. That means that your website, social media and job descriptions should reflect what you want candidates to know about your firm.

Promote your COVID response.

Are you taking extra steps to protect employees and make the working environment safe? Candidates are interested in hearing about it, particularly if you're going above and beyond for your workers.

Adjust your tone.

You might be a bouncy, happy company, but now is not the time for bouncy, happy branding. Make sure your public tone is appropriate for the situation. Consider a tone of constancy, safety and hope for the future.

Not sure how to get started?

> **Monster can help.**

What fall recruiting might look like

Companies expect to attend both virtual and in-person career fairs in the fall, but in general, the word “virtual” is coming up often. Here’s how companies are handling their plans:

They’ll take cues from colleges. DentaQuest, for instance, will be watching closely to see how dental schools proceed in the fall, and they’ll shift their recruiting strategy accordingly. “The situation is really changing around us, and what those students are experiencing in terms of their school life right now,” Martinez says. “We’ll look to be a very active partner and leader.”

They’ll scrap big meet-and-greets. Many are making plans already for smaller—and probably remote—events. PwC, for instance, used to invite hundreds of students to on-campus events, but the company has plans to replace those large gatherings with more intimate remote activities.

“We’re going to do most, if not everything, virtually,” Adams says. “We’ll be able to do small pod-type events. Let’s get 10 or 15 people into a virtual room and have a chat about PwC and what we do, and multiple of those, versus one big outing where we have hundreds of people and 20 PwC professionals.”

They’ll invest in technology. For at least the near future—and potentially far beyond—virtual technology is going to be a big part of the recruiting and hiring process. “If you haven’t already thought about tele-onboarding and what that’s going to look like and feel like and how you’re going to train people when you’re not sitting right next to them in the office, you should have started that yesterday,” Stratmann says.

The future

The job situation is a moving target, and the future is uncertain. Companies that embrace remote technology and work to adapt their policies and practices to new developments will be in a better position to hire and maintain their workforce.

“COVID-19 is a game changer for our society,” Newland says. “It’s going to fundamentally change the way in which we interact with each other in the workplace. This is a huge shift, the likes of which we haven’t seen probably in two generations.”

In the end, companies must stay agile and look for new prospects that may arise from a reshaped economy.

Monster is committed to helping you navigate post-COVID-19 recruiting and find the best new talent.

[Learn about our emerging workforce solutions.](#)

MONSTER