

RECRUITING TRENDS

2016-17

46th Edition

BRIEF 5

Recruiting Tools

Key findings from 2016-17 are presented in this research brief. We have broken the release of employer information into a series of short briefs that will be made available over the next six weeks. You can download the briefs from the [Collegiate Employment Research Institute](#).



Meet the Completers

We generated this convenience sample from employers currently seeking college talent through their interactions with college and university career services offices. Nearly 200 career service centers from around the country invited their employers to participate in this study. Approximately 4,350 employers provided information useful for understanding recruiting trends and practices. We will use information provided by those recruiting talent for full-time positions, internships, and co-ops for these research briefs. Readers can use the following key sample characteristics to determine how applicable our survey results are for their campus employer base.

Company Size		
Very small	> 9 employees	9%
Fast-growth	10-100 employees	30%
Small	101–500 employees	23%
Midsize	501–3,999 employees	20%
Large	4,000–25,000 employees	10%
Very large	> 25,000 employees	8%

Active Recruiting by Region	
International	5%
Entire U.S.	25%
Regional recruiting only	69%

Role in College Recruiting	
Full-time positions	71%
Internship or co-op positions only	12%
Short-term hiring	7%
Experienced hiring	10%

Key States	
Massachusetts	10%
Michigan	9%
Arizona, California, Florida, Ohio & Texas	6%

Institutions Where Companies Recruit Talent	
Two-year public college	28%
Four-year public college	53%
Four-year private college	40%
Two- & four-year for-profit institution	22%
Institution with bachelor's & advanced degree programs	69%
Institution with advanced degrees only	10%
Historically black college & university	17%
Hispanic-serving institution	15%
Asian, Asian-Pacific serving institutions	14%

Key Economic Sectors	
Professional, business & scientific services	22%
Manufacturing	13%
Educational services	10%
Finance & insurance	8%
Government	7%
Healthcare & social assistance	7%
Nonprofits	7%

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Talent seekers have a wide array of tools to identify, manage, and select job candidates. Each year we ask respondents to select the recruiting tools they use.

Like many of us they select tools that are cool, fun to use, or highly dependable. While most recruiters employ a number of tools, they rely heavily on just a few. This year we asked respondents to rate how important each tool was for talent acquisition (from 0 = no importance at all to 10 = critical importance).

Although employers may use all the tools included in the survey, perhaps 6 to 8 are used most often. The most common tool is posting a job announcement in places where candidates can easily find it. The two most common venues are the organization's website and the college or university's career management system. These passive practices are basic résumé depositories and as such may require little interaction between recruiters and candidates. The benefit for recruiters may be the distance from which they can winnow the unqualified candidates. In addition to traditional methods, several new ones are challenging the functional use of résumé depositories.

Employers have three proactive means for connecting to and recruiting talent whom they rate highly. Internships and co-ops, short-term employment (summer or between academic terms), and career fairs are the most important tools in the toolbox. Employers also rely on their current employees, including alumni from schools where they recruit, to identify candidates. This year, internships and co-ops earned the top spot for active talent development tools (average 7.66, with 97% of employers using this tool). Again we want to emphasize the positive correlation between the rise in importance of internships and co-ops and the sustainability of career fairs.

While most of these strategies have been around a long time, social media is relatively new. Its transient nature and brief shelf life make identifying and capturing qualified candidates a less than perfect recruitment tool. In past reports, we tried to ascertain how widespread social media was becoming and how it was being embedded in the recruiting process. Its importance rose this year as more organizations utilized social media options for more than an organizational branding strategy. One social media provider – LinkedIn – clearly leads in its functional use for recruiting. As organizations become more sophisticated in using social media, we may see other media sites (Facebook and Twitter, for example) be more widely employed for their ability to connect with, identify, and manage talent.

With the more competitive environment requiring employers to cast a wider net for talent, more employers appear to be turning to the large web-based recruitment portals, like CareerBuilder, Indeed and Monster, to assemble a large pool of candidates. The rating for this strategy shot up this year, compared to ratings obtained since 2008.

On-campus career fairs, which are joined at the hip with interns and co-ops, remain a critically important strategy; other types of career fairs, less so. Career fairs that cater to specialty niches like design, healthcare, and IT, find support among most employers. Other types of off-campus fairs (not hosted by colleges or universities) are less likely to be utilized by our respondents, at least for bachelor's candidates. One type of career fair – the virtual career fair – was viewed rather negatively by employers. Various groups of colleges and universities have united in attempts

to augment student-employer interactions by holding these online career fairs. So far this approach has not resonated with employers.

Vendor-hosted tools

Through an open-ended question, we asked employers to list the tools, mobile applications, platforms, or recruiting software that they purchase from vendors and have found valuable in assisting their recruitment efforts. In tabulating the services listed we did not include the common platforms used for career management at college and universities: Simplicity, Handshake, GradLeaders, and College Central. Nor did we tally those who merely mentioned the college system or their own application system. We were trying to learn which tools were coming into play.

- ◆ The most frequently mentioned systems were the résumé depositories Indeed and CareerBuilder and the talent connecting social media portal LinkedIn. Employer comments about these tools focused on the ability to easily assemble a large pool of candidates but noted that the quality varied widely. LinkedIn was praised for finding experienced talent who had the relevant experience and skills being sought and other candidates, especially college students, who showed initiative to use the site.
- ◆ Other popular hosts at a much lower level than the previous group included Facebook, Monster, Craigslist, ADP, and Ziprecruiter. Craigslist is primarily used by local employers who are having trouble finding very specific skills.
- ◆ Applicant tracking systems generated a lot of conversation. Some organizations were adopting their own internal ATS programs. Most were relying on vendor services, and there appear to be many. Three frequently mentioned were iCims, Taleo (Oracle), and Aplitracks. Yello (formerly RECSOLU) has a few followers but is not as widespread as one might expect from use at recent career fairs. The list of providers is lengthy including TAM, Jazz, Kronos, Newton, Success Factors, Talent+Hire, ApplicantPro, ApplicantStack, Greenhouse, Lever, and many more.
- ◆ Organizations tap into specialty sites for specific majors (teaching, nursing, technology) or interests (Idealist, government jobs, ag careers, teachers, volunteers).

College recruiting in the 2020s

We asked respondents to envision college recruiting over the next decade and forecast the adjustments their organization may make to respond to the changing recruiting environment. About 15 percent of respondents indicate they anticipate no change in their present practices. While others did not anticipate changes in the methods they used to recruit talent, they did expect to expand their range of practices, become more intentional, and focus more sharply on key institutions and practices. Other words our respondents commonly used included: involved, anticipate, envision, aggressive, interactive, and simply, more.

Nearly 20 percent indicated an increasing dependence on social media and virtual technology for recruiting and interviewing (Skype, Google Hangouts, LinkedIn). Their increasing adoption of these systems is the result of higher quality technology and student acceptance, which is leading to an improved student experience.

Additionally, about 10 percent plan to leverage web-based and mobile tools to better manage communications and transactional processes. This is probably much understated and is more expected, given the focus on applicant tracking systems mentioned in the preceding section.

Another key strategy that organizations are going to expand from current levels, resurrect from the graveyard (methods dropped during the recession), or use to build a new program centered on

Recruiting Strategies in Order of Importance for Employers			
Toolbox	Employers who use strategy (%)	Employers who rated 8 to 10 (%)	Essential tool in recruiting strategy (mean)
Post open positions on their organization's website	98	81	8.79
Post positions through the college or university online employment system	99	70	8.15
Hire interns, co-ops, or part-time student workers (summer employees) who have worked or are currently working for their organization	97	63	7.66
Attend career fairs on college campuses	97	58	7.29
Solicit names of potential employees from current employees	99	61	7.61
Use current employees who are alumni of the institutions where they recruit to connect with students	97	50	6.88
Visit college campuses to talk to students (classroom presentations, information sessions, student organization events)	95	44	6.46
Connect with potential talent; post company information and positions on social media sites (Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Twitter, etc.)	97	49	6.85
Request candidate résumés from college career service offices	96	48	6.75
Post positions with national web-based employment providers (Monster, Google, CareerBuilder)	95	54	7.03
Seek candidates directly through faculty connections	97	39	6.22
Attend targeted job fairs (for specific skills such as design, health services, IT)	93	44	6.36
Interview prospective candidates on college campuses	94	40	6.0
Solicit names of potential employees through the alumni organizations on the campuses where you recruit	93	33	5.68
Attend job fairs not held on college campuses	91	35	5.7
Post positions on local or state (Chamber of Commerce, economic development authority, government) job boards	91	35	5.66
Place ads in media and professional journals or magazines	89	21	4.62
Use a staffing consultant or hiring agency	14	18	4.31
Participate in virtual career fairs	12	13	3.95

internships and co-ops. As many as 40 percent, possibly more, planned to utilize internships as their key talent development strategy. Coupled with this strategy would be to engage students earlier in their college experience, develop stronger partnerships with campus staff, and offer more experiences that will introduce their organizational brand to students and campus staff. These actions may result in shedding current activities, such as on-campus interviews, resume referrals, job posting, and even attendance at career fairs.

Lastly, a few mentioned organizational fit, skill-based, or skill-specific recruiting, but challenges with current frameworks and systems will likely limit most organizations from shifting from major-based sourcing and recruiting. As this area matures, we can expect employers will devote more attention to these systems.

Respondent comments

Every year we welcome unstructured comments from our respondents. The comments included here further indicate the directions respondents plan to take with recruiting in the 2020s:

- ◆ [We plan on] earlier identification of talent through high school information sessions and career talks; internships/externships designed for college freshmen and sophomores; rotational internships designed with flexibility of focus; and more branding events focusing on topical subjects rather than company or technical information.
- ◆ [We will] engage in more social media advertising and build stronger relationships with university faculty and staff outside the career center. We will also launch an internship

program and involve ourselves more in "job shadow" opportunities for students. It is no longer enough to go to career fairs and conduct on-campus interviews.

- ◆ We will be taking the "campus" out of campus recruiting. (This was a common sentiment, but no one elaborated on what recruiting would look like.)
- ◆ [Recruiting] will be more virtual where employers do not have to physically be on a campus to recruit but can do virtual meetings about their organization over the web.
- ◆ I believe college recruiting will be primarily done online by 2020. It is already trending in that direction, and our data shows that online recruiting is more efficient and productive than on-campus recruiting.
- ◆ I believe there will still be the option and need for students and hiring managers to connect face-to-face, especially when being placed in an unfamiliar industry or location, but the way to connect with the company, its recruiters, opportunities, etc. will be varied. Sourcing strategies for university hires will be expanded to going beyond the universities.
- ◆ I see us expanding to look for recruits outside of the ones with degrees specific to our professions. We will need to hire people who are not trained and do the training and educating ourselves.