
Survey findings: The value of online student recruitment fairs

First and foremost, I wish to thank all college recruiters and admissions officers who took part in this survey and shared their opinions and experiences regarding online recruitment fairs.

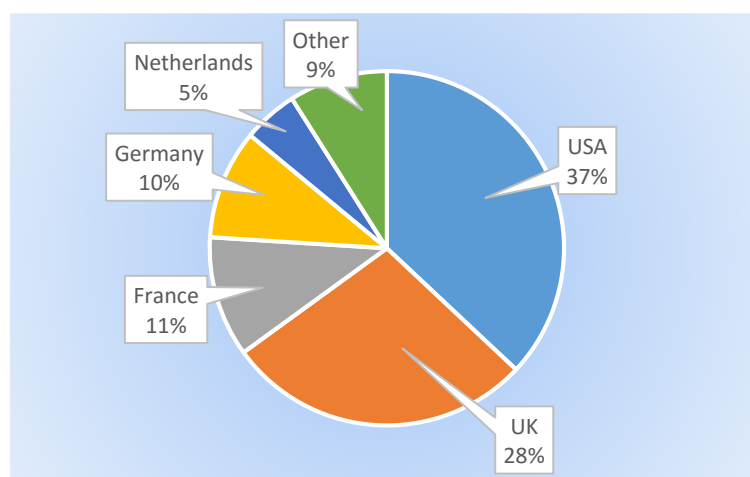
Key takeaways

- Online (virtual) student recruitment fairs are well known (73%) among college recruiters
- However, less than half (41%) recruiters have participated or know someone who participated in an online fair
- According to recruiters that participated in online events:
 - Key advantages are lower cost, time saving and great first-contact vehicle
 - Main drawbacks are technical problems and quality of students (candidates)
- Almost half (45%) of recruiters indicate that they would participate in online fairs, while a third (29%) is still undecided.

Background of the survey

As a marketing and event management hands-on professional and university professor, I am aware that online job (career) fairs are [gaining popularity](#) in the talent recruitment industry. Budgetary constraints and possibility to recruit non-traditional talent are frequently cited as the main growth factors. As expected, the use of online fair platforms has been [increasing](#) also in the college (student) recruitment space.

As technology advances and student lifestyle becomes more mobile and internet-based, the challenges of student acquisition are continuously shifting. My Oivivio team and I wanted to understand the attitudes of college recruiters and admissions officers towards the online student recruitment fairs as well as related challenges. In October 2017 we surveyed 827 recruiters. The majority of recruiters came from North America and Europe, with over a half (65%) from the US and UK. The aim of the 5-question anonymous survey was to understand the role of online (virtual) fairs in student recruitment strategy.



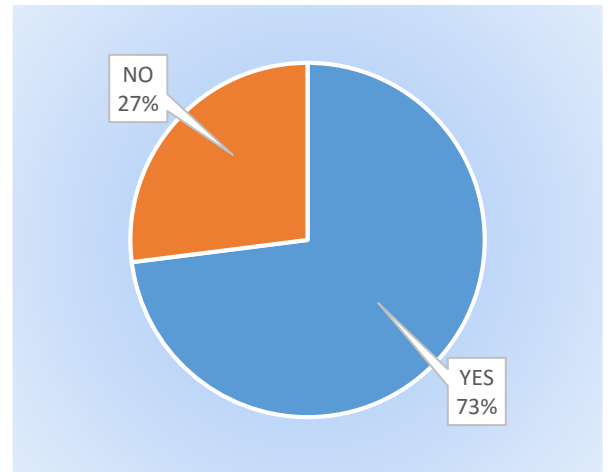
Distribution of respondents by country

Survey Questions

Survey consisted of 5 questions: 3 close-ended and 2 qualitative, open-ended ones.

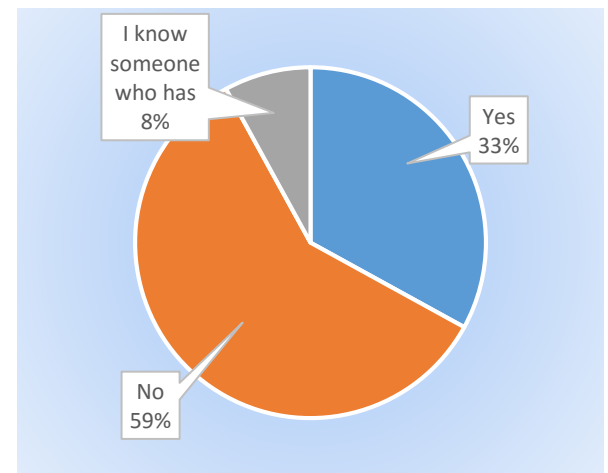
1. Have you heard of online (virtual) student recruitment fairs?

Three quarters (73%) of recruiters said that they are familiar with online fairs.



2. Have you participated in an online fair, or do you know someone who has?

Almost half (41%) of recruiters have participated or know someone who has participated in online fairs.



3. What was your/their experience?

This question was qualitative and open-ended. Recruiters provided their input that can be split into positive and negative experiences.

Top three positive comments are:

- Lower cost for travel
- Time saving
- Broader candidate outreach

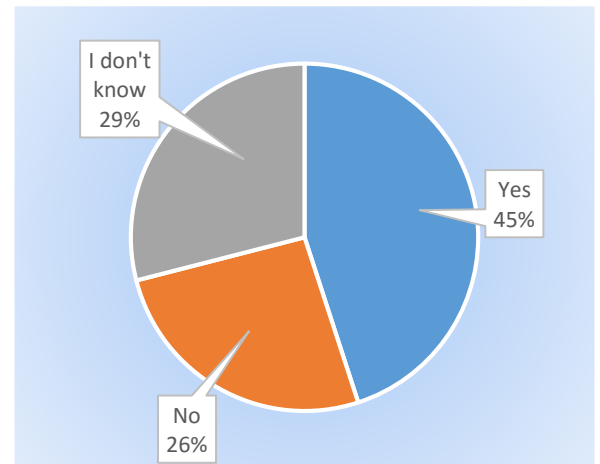
Top three negative comments are:

- Insufficient number of students
- Poor candidates selection
- Technical problems

4. Would you participate in an online fair?

Almost half (45%) of the recruiters expressed willingness to participate in online fairs. Additional third (29%) recruiters are undecided. Only a quarter (26%) indicated that they would not to participate.

Among the comments, some recruiters indicated that they would consider their participating, but with other service providers.



5. Any comments/thoughts regarding participating in an online fair?

This question brought a wealth of comments and provided us with an insight into recruiters' expectations and wishes regarding this (relatively) new recruitment platform. Convenience, cost-efficiency and broader outreach come out as strong benefits of online fairs. Concerns about the quality of candidates, overall ROI and the value of personal contact are also on almost everyone's mind.

Some comments that we present verbatim are:

- *"As long as the organizers can bring genuine leads with strong interest I believe this will help us reach better leads."*
- *"It has potential and could save on travel costs"*
- *"I would potentially be interested in trying this type of event if aimed at non-EU leads, but would need to be convinced about value for money and the quality of and quantity of non-EU leads."*
- *"Great alternative to traditional Fairs. More convenient, practical and cost effective for all concerned parties."*
- *"Personal contact is still key."*
- *"There needs to be a clear benefit to both parties, clear outcomes, sensible offering which is easy to access and has added value to what is already available online."*
- *"Enables broad global outreach, but to be efficient requires a pre-screening of participants for limited places."*

Conclusion / Findings

Although recruiters still find value in traditional fairs, there is a large number of those who are willing to try out new forms of student engagement. Concerns related to technical issues that plagued early virtual events have been weeded out. Modern online platforms evolved and provide fine user experience for both, recruiters and visitors. Online video chat helps mitigate the lack of direct, physical interaction. The only thing that is required is internet connection. It appears that online fairs could be cost-effective method for lead generation, first contact with students and expansion into new and broader geographic and demographic candidate pool.

All suggestions and comments are appreciated. Feel free to share this Report with fellow recruiters.

Best regards,

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