HOW TO OPTIMIZE

Your Campus Career Fair Experience

If you've attended a campus career fair and come back to the office feeling defeated, you're in the right place. This guide compiles all the knowledge you need to gain the most from the campus recruitment experience.

yello

Three-fourths of American employers now visit college campuses to source and select new hires.[1]

In fact, employer participation in campus career fairs is the highest it's ever been[2] and companies employ an average of 14 full-time university relations and recruiting staff.[3] The reason is clear: Career fairs facilitate connections with a high volume of students in a few short hours, pumping hundreds of potential employees into early talent pipelines.

But without strategic planning and execution, campus career fairs can present challenges, including:

Lack of clarity on which campus partnerships to pursue and which to forgoe

Questions about return on investment from company leadership

Endless hours of post-event follow-up work

Time away from the office for revenue-generating employees

Employers attended an average of 41 career fairs in 2017, so it's important to navigate these challenges and make the most of each event you attend.[4]

Use this guide to learn how to:

Get a headstart before the fair

Streamline event planning and execution

Embrace process automation

Report on campus recruiting success

Get a headstart before the fair

Prior to your arrival on campus, establish your company's brand visibility to increase awareness with undergrads. When it's time to attend the formal career fair, students will be familiar with your brand, giving you an edge on the competition. Pre-fair, consider the following:

Make yourself known early.

It's never too early to get your brand in front of students. Employers begin recruiting interns an average of eight months in advance of their start date.[5] Even freshmen are being subtly recruited all the time, so consider sponsoring new student orientation sessions to begin building brand awareness. Get in touch with the career center, talk to professors and connect with student groups long before the career fair.

"One of the biggest mistakes I have seen is that often times the first time students have engaged with a TA team is the career fair," says Tara D. Carter, a corporate recruiter for a Washington D.C. management consulting firm who leads workplace preparation seminars targeted to millennials. "By the time the fair arrives, the students should have known your name, what you do and why they want to work with you."

On-site office visits and a steady stream of communication via direct mail, email and social media help keep young prospects warm through the years. When this group of students is ready to begin their internship or career search, your brand will already be top-of-mind.

Approach recruitment with a sales mindset. Marketing experts estimate that it takes an average of 7 to 13 touchpoints to deliver a qualified sales lead.[6] When "selling" an employer to students, campus recruiters who engage with candidates early and stay in touch over time will have an automatic advantage.

Partner with student organizations and clubs.

Sponsor the recruitment efforts of Greek organizations, honor societies or professional groups, while providing insight into career paths with your company. Identify the top-performing student leaders of these organizations and build relationships so they consider you when they begin applying for jobs.

8 months

The number of months in advance that employers begin recruiting interns

Create an information session "roadshow" for students.

Glassdoor, LinkedIn, Vault and Universum are telling recruits about your company every day.

Understanding that this is the case, double down on the channels and messages you do control: social media, website content and blogs. These can be a helpful supplement to a more traditional tactic that's also ripe for modernization: the information session.

If your company has multiple office locations, host information sessions in those cities during summer and holiday breaks to meet with students in a more casual environment. This type of setting can be a lower-stress environment than a campus-wide career fair. Students will gain a deeper understanding of your company and have the ability to further hone their professional skills and education in their remaining school years.

> "Students get more than half of their information about a firm from sources that are not controlled by the firm." [7]
>
> *Dr. John Sullivan, Professor of Management, HR thought leader and talent management author*

Communicate with past career fair attendees.

Use campus recruiting software to maintain communication with students you met previously. According to Dr. John Sullivan of San Francisco State University, lack of immediate follow-up is one of the most common mistakes college recruiters make.

"In a highly competitive world, you need to communicate quickly with top candidates after the event in order to show your interest," Sullivan says.
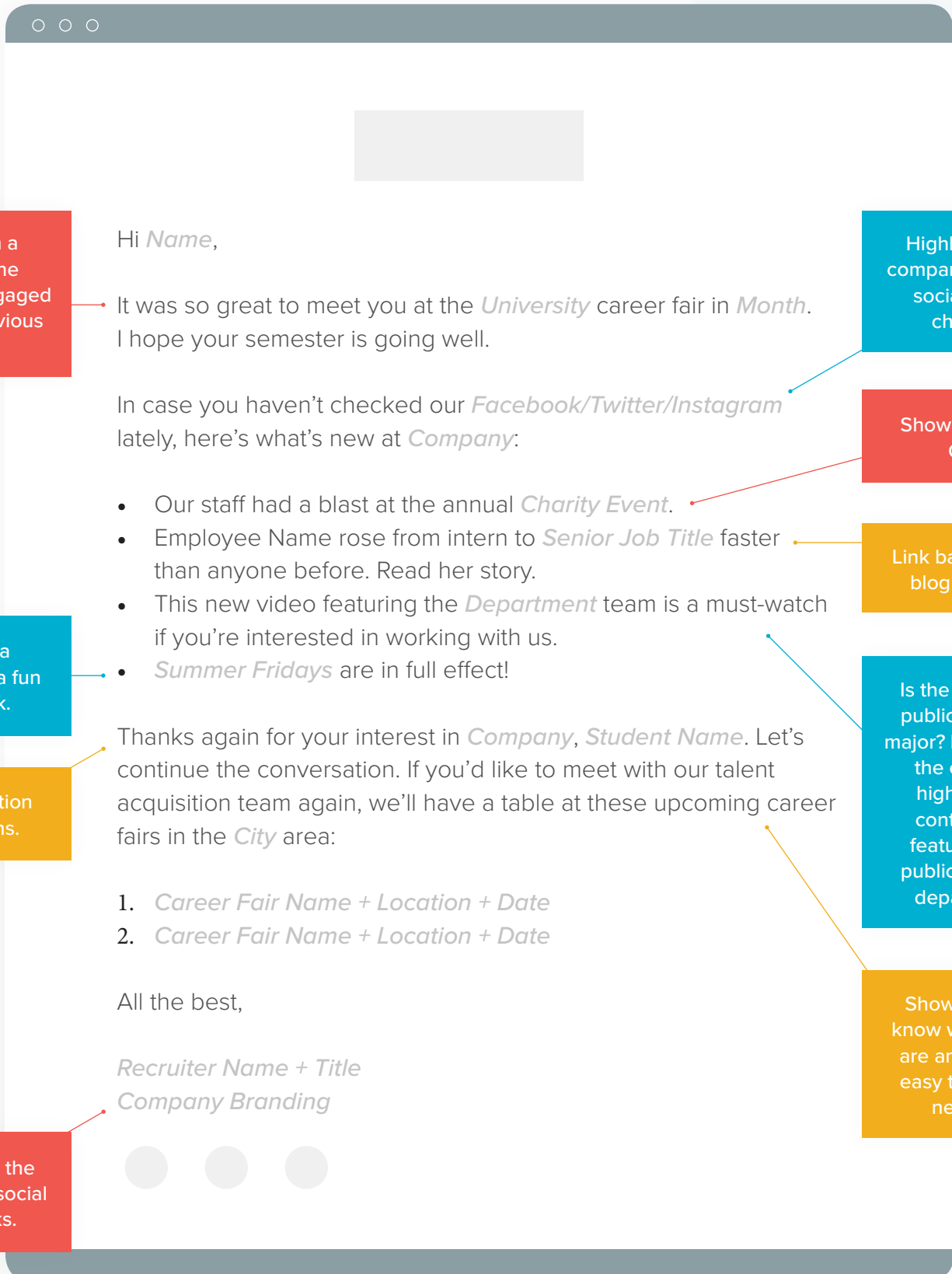
Automate monthly email sends to inform these students about developments within your company, including summer events to showcase culture, stories of career development within the organization and your company's future career fair schedule.

Candidate email template:

Hi *Name*,

It was so great to meet you at the *University* career fair in *Month*. I hope your semester is going well.

In case you haven't checked our *Facebook/Twitter/Instagram* lately, here's what's new at *Company*:

- Our staff had a blast at the annual *Charity Event*.
- Employee Name rose from intern to *Senior Job Title* faster than anyone before. Read her story.
- This new video featuring the *Department* team is a must-watch if you're interested in working with us.
- *Summer Fridays* are in full effect!

Thanks again for your interest in *Company*, *Student Name*. Let's continue the conversation. If you'd like to meet with our talent acquisition team again, we'll have a table at these upcoming career fairs in the *City* area:

1. *Career Fair Name + Location + Date*
2. *Career Fair Name + Location + Date*

All the best,

Recruiter Name + Title
Company Branding

Send from a recruiter the candidate engaged with at a previous event.

Highlight your company's priority social media channel.

Showcase your CSR.

Link back to your blog content.

End with a reminder of a fun work perk.

Is the student a public relations major? Personalize the email by highlighting content that features your public relations department.

Personalization always wins.

Show that you know where they are and make it easy to find the next fair.

Don't forget the website and social media links.

yello   yello.co

Streamline event planning and execution

Attending campus career fairs can result in significant returns or can drain your recruiting budget and resources, depending on your preparation strategy. Follow this checklist to ensure your company's presence at career fairs is efficient and results in the highest ROI possible.

Set event goals.

Use your organization's historical data to set both overall event goals and individual event goals, and create a tactical plan to accomplish each goal. Identify the resources you need to execute these tactics.

Be willing to adapt.

The median number of four-year schools targeted by recruiting teams is 20.[8] Do established relationships with career centers and on-campus organizations bring you back to the same schools each fall? If a university no longer offers a major you're targeting or didn't result in high-quality hires last year, it may no longer be worth the investment of your time and resources at that campus.

Instead of maintaining the same schedule every year, audit the results of past career fairs your company has attended and organize the data by school, including the number of qualified candidates per event, the number of interviews secured, how many offers were made, total offers accepted and what happened to the candidates you met. Letting go of long-term yet ineffective university partnerships can be difficult, but it is essential to meeting career fair goals.

> "By maintaining the status quo, firms are not only missing out on high-quality, under-utilized talent pools, but may be allocating recruiting resources in an inefficient way." [9]
>
> *Lauren Rivera, Associate Professor of Management & Organizations at Kellogg School of Management*

20 schools

The median number of four-year schools targeted by recruiting teams.

Implement campus recruiting software.

Establish your reputation at campus career fairs by using the latest in recruiting technology to stand out to students.

Use campus recruiting software to create, track and manage a high volume of applications and build a candidate pipeline to support current open roles, and for future planning. Leverage the software to capture everything you need to know about a particular campus and create a central event repository; this insight will help you understand trends and improve your ROI for campus-based recruiting.

"Technology is truly improving the recruitment experience for both students and companies."

Alexander Lowry, director of Master of Science in Financial Analysis, Gordon College

"From a technology perspective, innovation is critical to candidate experience, especially at the college level where students no longer use hardback textbooks or submit paper assignments to professors. Students like companies that appear to understand them and show growth in an ever-changing world."

Tara D. Carter, corporate recruiter at a management consulting firm who leads workplace preparation seminars for millennials

Ensure key university contacts are in place.

Use campus recruiting software to maintain a database of campus information, contacts and relationships. This will help your recruiting team avoid last-minute issues due to staff turnover.

Modernize your candidate experience.

If you're still collecting paper resumes and entering candidate data on spreadsheets, it's time to invest in the tools to help you retire this manual process.

Once your new software is implemented, hold a lunch-and-learn session prior to the start of the fall recruiting season, so the team is well-versed on the technology they will use at each event. Armed with the latest technology, talent acquisition teams will be prepared to make data-driven decisions.

Embrace automation

Career fairs are a blur of shaking hands, collecting candidate information and trying to stay upbeat through it all. Automate your event processes to cut down on administrative work pre-, during and post-event.

Pre-screen candidates.

One of the greatest campus recruiting time savers is the video interview. Face-to-face interviews require physical space, staff time and resources that you don't need to spend for every single interested candidate.

If you have a list of students who will be attending the career fair, administer pre-recorded video interviews prior to the event. This will let you schedule in-person interviews in advance, and set aside time to speak with high-potential candidates.

Eliminate administrative work to accelerate hiring.

According to 90 percent of recruiters, the balance of power has now shifted dramatically from the employer to the talent.[10] When the best candidates have multiple offers on the table, hiring speed becomes an important deciding factor. Don't let old-fashioned paperwork slow you down.

Minimize the administrative processes associated with career fairs by enabling candidates to upload their resumes on the spot, eliminating manual data entry post-event. If you're interviewing on-site, provide qualified candidates a link to self-schedule their next-round interview, so you can avoid getting caught in the scheduling matrix. Investing in technology and minimizing administrative work also helps companies humanize the candidate experience.

"I know of one financial company that's done a fantastic job building a hiring process that has a lot more human elements," Lowry says. "They acknowledge where you stand in the process and provide the real-time feedback that today's students expect."

"Most career fairs are run based on intuition and tradition, which is a major mistake because the talent marketplace, universities and college students have all changed dramatically. Decisions on which campuses to focus on, whether virtual or on-site career fairs are superior and which recruitment marketing approaches attract the top candidates in each field need to be based on data."

Dr. John Sullivan, Professor of Management, HR thought leader and talent management author

Implement an evaluation process.

For the candidates with whom you're moving forward, set up talent workflows that include online and mobile evaluations to reduce the amount of time required to collect interviewer feedback. Assign evaluations and automate follow-up reminders to interviewers to ensure evaluations are completed promptly.

Seamlessly build a pipeline.

Post-event, return to work with a diverse, engaged talent pipeline. Keep these potential candidates warm through regular communication to support open roles and for future planning.

Report on success

One of the most important components of attending career fairs is measuring the ROI associated with each event. Understanding where your recruitment marketing efforts are paying off will help accurately determine where to allocate your time and budget to gain the biggest return. Track these metrics at every career fair:

Quality of hire.

The easiest and most effective action you can take to modernize your metrics is to gauge the satisfaction of hiring managers with the quality of hires that your URR program produces each year. To implement, survey the managers who received new college hires at 6 and 12 months and ask them to assess new hire quality on a 1 to 10 scale (based on the manager's perception of their on-the-job performance, their fit and their retention rate). You can also use this quality-of-hire data to accurately determine which schools produce the best hires and what candidate assessment approaches best identify future top performers.

Cost per applicant and cost per hire.

Campus career fairs are a great opportunity to build your recruitment brand presence, network and develop your talent pipeline, but it's crucial to know the cost per applicant and hire. **With Society for Human Resource Management citing an average cost per hire of $4,129, it's essential to understand career fair costs.**[11] Use a simple formula to calculate the ROI per campus event.

<div style="background:#EF4E45;color:white;padding:1em;text-align:center;">

COST PER APPLICANT

$$\frac{\text{Event Cost} + \text{Travel Costs}}{\text{Total Number of Applicants}}$$

</div>

<div style="background:#EF4E45;color:white;padding:1em;text-align:center;">

COST PER HIRE

$$\frac{\text{Event Cost} + \text{Travel Costs}}{\text{Total Number of Hires}}$$

</div>

Ratio of offers made vs. offers accepted.

If candidates you meet at hiring events make it through your interview process and aren't accepting your offers, assess whether your interview process is too long, you're losing candidates to competitors or you need to provide your team with additional interview training. Keep track of why you're losing candidates and use that insight to improve your process.

Your number of offers accepted divided by total offers made provides you with another key metric: the offer acceptance rate (OAR). **In 2017, employers reported an average OAR of 68.2% among new college graduates**.[12] Keep an eye on this number and compare your rate across different campuses.

Ratio of interviews scheduled vs. offers accepted.

Track the candidate journey all the way through — from interviews scheduled to offers accepted — to identify which event results in the most qualified candidates. Set a success ratio specific to your recruiting goals and use that benchmark to determine whether you need to remove particular events from your roster.

<div style="background:#EF4E45;color:white;padding:1em;text-align:center;">

INTERVIEWS SCHEDULED TO OFFERS ACCEPTED RATIO

$$\frac{\text{Offers Accepted}}{\text{Interviews Scheduled}}$$

</div>

Did you know?

Yello can help you meet your goals. Clients have seen the below results:

220% increase in full-time and intern hires within one year of using Yello	Student applications increase from **3,000 to 50,000** within 18 months	Savings of **$3.4 million** through personnel efficiencies	Growth of a talent community of **2.3 million** candidates

Campus recruiting software can help your organization by:

- Leveraging metrics, including conversation rates and total hires, to report to company leadership and adjust campus-based strategies moving forward.

- Retaining institutional knowledge and driving stakeholder alignment with a central tool to oversee all events, relationships, materials, candidates and communications.

- Simplifying execution of campus recruitment events, from career fairs to on-campus interviews, by planning and managing your event-based strategy in a single platform.

- Providing a tailored application experience with flexible forms and unique workflow routings to reflect the campus hiring process.

At Yello, we're on a mission to humanize the candidate experience.
Find out how – request a demo of our talent acquisition software today.

REQUEST A DEMO

References

[1] https://hbr.org/2015/10/firms-are-wasting-millions-recruiting-on-only-a-few-campuses

[2] https://www.naceweb.org/uploadedfiles/files/2018/publication/executive-summary/2018-nace-career-services-benchmark-survey-executive-summary.pdf

[3] https://www.naceweb.org/talent-acquisition/organizational-structure/majority-of-urr-departments-a-component-of-hr

[4] http://www.naceweb.org/store/2017/recruiting-benchmarks-survey-2017

[5] http://www.naceweb.org/store/2018/internship-and-co-op-survey-report

[6] https://thedma.org/blog/marketing-education/why-it-takes-7-to-13-touches-to-deliver-a-qualified-sales-lead-part-6-case-study

[7] https://drjohnsullivan.com/articles/whats-wrong-with-college-recruiting-identifying-your-out-of-date-program-features

[8] https://www.naceweb.org/talent-acquisition/organizational-structure/majority-of-urr-departments-a-component-of-hr

[9] https://hbr.org/2015/10/firms-are-wasting-millions-recruiting-on-only-a-few-campuses

[10] https://drjohnsullivan.com/articles/whats-wrong-with-college-recruiting-identifying-your-out-of-date-program-features

[11] https://www.shrm.org/about-shrm/press-room/press-releases/pages/human-capital-benchmarking-report.aspx

[12] https://www.naceweb.org/talent-acquisition/trends-and-predictions/benchmarks-cycle-times-offer-and-acceptance-rates/