BRIEF HANDBOOK FOR **ORGANIZING A VIRTUAL JOB FAIR** FOR THE FIRST TIME

Leveraging the experience of 200 virtual job fairs

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1. THE RISE OF VIRTUAL JOB FAIRS

In the last years, we have seen a growing trend in the use of online platforms for organizing virtual events such as job fairs. Given the advantages in some areas of virtual events over traditional ones (in terms of cost or gathering of user behaviour statistics, for example), it is easy to understand their increasing popularity.

Virtual job fairs have certain advantages over traditional events, making them attractive from an organizer's perspective.

- **Reduced organizational costs:** not only are the setup costs for the fair significantly reduced, the savings to exhibitors and visitors in terms of travel, accommodation, and lost work hours is significant.

- **Capacity for total reach:** one of the significant advantages of virtual events is how the distance barrier for potential attendees to a traditional job fair is eliminated. This allows companies to expand their reach to a much broader pool of qualified candidates. College virtual job fairs can reach all the students and alumni quickly and this is a crucial feature for employers.

- **Measurable Return on Investment:** thanks to highly detailed user statistics that we can extract from a virtual event, such as time spent at each stand, downloads, webcast attendance, or the number of CVs gathered at a stand, the ROI of a virtual event can be calculated and analysed with much greater ease than a traditional event.

2. FIRST THREE QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO HAVE CLEAR

Planning a virtual job fair is similar to designing a physical one. The basic concept is the same; To put in contact recruiters and candidates. So the actions required to create a successful event are very similar. Being a first event, some organizers may feel that the critical aspect is the chosen software. However, all the major suppliers available in the market ensure the performance of the platform, so the real key to the success is to have a clear answer to these questions:

- **Who will be the visitors?** With a corporate virtual job fairs the visitors can be current employees or prospective ones. For example, an internal mobility event has a very targeted audience while a general recruitment event is intended for a

much more comprehensive audience. Also, regarding geography, is the event going to be restricted to a particular area or are you recruiting all around the country? And finally, do you have clear the profile of the visitor? i.e. SAP developers, RNs… This will be important when planning the promotional campaign.

● **Who will be the exhibitors?** In a corporate event, exhibitors can be from different areas of the company, or regions, or jobs. There are all kinds of options depending on the profile of candidates you´re addressing. It's interesting to ask your supplier to show you some examples to get some ideas. Once you decide who are the exhibitors, next is who will populate the booths and be active on the chat. You can do that on their behalf or give them a training so that other people can help you.

● **How will I reach the visitors?** If this is an internal event, that's easy. Just an email will do all the job. In average, 65% of invited attendees register for an internal virtual event only with informative emails from the company. However, if the goal is to attract candidates from outside, you need to consider your promotional campaign. Here we'll give you some ideas.

3. HOW TO ATTRACT CANDIDATES

Once you have clear the profile of visitors that you want for your event, it's time to reach them. Here there are some possible ways of doing this:

- **Social networks**. Most virtual job fairs available in the market require zero downloads and are perfect to be distributed through social media. Just with one click, visitors will be at the virtual event in few seconds, or at the landing page if the virtual job fair has not started yet. And this is an action which involves no cost at all.

- **Your website**. How many visits per month does your recruitment website have? During the days before the event you can ask IT to add a banner with a direct access to the virtual job fair landing page.

- **Interactive banners in emails**. Add to the signature of your email a banner advertising the event. This is an efficient way of promoting the event in front of everyone with whom you interact by email during the weeks before the event. And ask your colleagues to use it as well!

- **Email mailing lists**. We recommend at least three emails to potential interested attendees. Keep in mind that not only the recipient will get them! Many of them will forward the emails to friends
    - One month before the event: Save the date - You can register now
    - Day before the event: Reminder - Tomorrow it's the day
    - When the event opens: Act now – The event is open

- Promotion in **local press** (internet) or local radio. Depending on your target and budget, you may use also Linkedin.

- **Ask for a budget from an agency**. You could get a fee per registered candidate meeting the profile you define or find a way that works better for you. You can contact PR Agencies, communication agencies who can work with job boards… Be creative!

4. INTERNAL WORK

It's time to think about the internal tasks that you have to plan. This will help you showcase your company properly and to let the team know which are their tasks.

- Decide **who are going to be the exhibitors:** There are several ways to do it. For instance, you can use the booths for different business lines of the company, or maybe based on regions…This will impact also on who's going to be involved during the rest of the process.
- **How many of them**? Are you sorting them in Exhibition Halls?. You can plan a virtual job fair with 2 or 3 booths, or a large event with 20 or 30. If this is the case, you may want to sort them out in different pavilions. In case of doubt, ask your provider for some tips and case studies.
- **Who's going to upload the information**? Is everything going to be handled by HR and your team, or you expect that each booth will assign a person to be in charge

of the booth? If this is the case, you need to allocate some time for training and giving tech support to this team

- What kind of **information** are you going to collect **from the candidates**? Name, region, age... what kind of information do you want to collect? How are the Resumes going to be imported into your database?
- **Customizations**. Do you have any specific requirements that need to be fulfilled? i.e. API integration, on premises hosting, bilingual event... In a first edition it's always recommended to take the platform as it is, but if you have certain requirements, it's important to have that clear at the beginning of the process.
- Who's going to **be connected during the live day**? The written chat is a good opportunity to engage other people within the company in the recruitment process. Actual employees can be logged in and chatting about their experience and answer questions from the candidates. Maybe you prefer that it is your team who is handling all the conversations.
- **How are you showing the jobs at the platform**? You can upload them one by one, or make an integration with your current ATS. This will imply some extra cost depending on the provider but will help you to have all the job applications on the same site
- The URL, the pre-fair promotion, the timeline... There are several small decisions that need to be taken so **one person should be responsible for the project** on the company side. This will require some time dedication, especially when the actual date of the event is coming.

5. COSTS INVOLVED

We can divide the cost structure of a virtual job fair into four areas: **marketing, sales, Helpdesk and software**. Depending on what costs can be internalized by the event organizer, the profitability of a virtual job fair will be more significant. With the appropriate training and marketing tools, you can leverage the pre-existing relationship with your clients and offer them a new digital product.

In terms of marketing, the possibility of communicating to an extensive database of candidates in your database can dramatically cut the costs compared to someone who would have to invest in a costly advertising campaign.

- **Software Platform**: The software is a fixed cost that needs to be outsourced to a software provider. This will be the platform that you will use to organize and present your event. **The value of the platform depends on a variety of components such** as the number of booths and live days, customisation and database

integration. Solutions range from $ 5k to $ 30k in the US so **it's good to shop around**.

- **Marketing**: Marketing will be essential for attracting the maximum number of attendees to your virtual job fair. Mobile events lend themselves well to online marketing and social media, so if you already have a robust online presence, this is an advantage. **Promotion should not be expensive if you have an excellent database**, but if you need to build it, costs will skyrocket.

- **Promotion among exhibitors:** First, you need to define your exhibitors. Different areas of the company, regional offices, kinds of jobs… This is one of the keys to success when you organize a virtual job fair. **Define who is going to be connected during the live day. Is HR going to be the one doing it or are you involving other departments?**. Plan some time for the training of everyone who's going to be included on the event. Your software supplier should be able to do this for you.

- **Support**: You will have to be available to help exhibitors during the event and supporting them beforehand. As there is no physical supply chain cost (printing costs, materials costs, merchandising, etc.), this cost is entirely dedicated to the helpdesk. **Be in contact with your platform supplier about this issue to receive technical training and support** for the platform and welcome materials for the exhibitors.

About EasyVirtualFair

EasyVirtualFair is a virtual job fair software developer with experience with more than two hundred online careers fairs worldwide. With offices in North America (Philadelphia) and Europe (Madrid), our platform is used by over two thousand exhibitors and more than one million users, creating online communities in twenty countries. This White Paper series is based on the experience and best practices that we have observed, which we are now happy to share with you. We work closely with virtual job fairs organizers (Job Boards, universities, associations) to support their sales and marketing strategies. If you are planning a virtual career fair and want a free consultation, contact us at info@easyvirtualfair.com*.*