Virtual hiring event platforms versus video conferencing tools: a comparison guide

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It took a global pandemic to make virtual recruiting the new standard, and we predict many employers will continue hiring online even once it's safe to connect in person again. And in the realm of virtual recruiting, organizations have a lot of options. Understanding your options is the first step to making the right choices about how to design a recruiting strategy that will carry you into the future.

In this guide, we'll look at two primary platforms recruiters are using to connect with candidates: virtual hiring event platforms (or virtual career fair platforms) and video conferencing tools. We'll explore what each option involves, and outline the similarities and differences between the two, so you'll be able to make informed decisions about your team's approach to virtual recruiting.

What are virtual hiring events?

Let's get right to the point. Virtual hiring event platforms include all the tools and features you need to efficiently and effectively connect with candidates and are much more robust than tools like Zoom and WebEx.

But even so, virtual hiring events can mean different things to different recruiters. In general, we're using this phrase to refer to any hiring event that happens online at a specified date and time. But the specifics of the events can vary widely from one employer to the next.

Virtual hiring events can live at different places in the recruiting funnel. For example, some virtual hiring events represent the top of the funnel, where recruiters are connecting with candidates for the first time and pre-screening talent in virtual chat sessions. Other events might strictly focus on the interview stage, where recruiters interview candidates in one-on-one video sessions. (UPDATE: Brazen's latest feature release allows employers to host virtual video chats with candidates from within the virtual hiring event platform.)

Virtual hiring event platforms have many different components beyond video interviews; they can also incorporate marketing tools, follow-up features, video messages, recruiting chatbots, text conversations, and other features that help recruiters manage candidates in their pipeline, which we'll explore in more depth later in this guide.

Examples of virtual hiring events:

- *Text-based or video-based chats and conversations between recruiters and candidates*
- *Information session with hiring managers*
- *Internal-mobility virtual hiring event for all open positions*
- *Diversity and inclusion virtual event*
- *Military or Veterans virtual event*
- *Virtual interview sessions for previously pre-screened candidates*
- *Virtual career fair with multiple employers*

What is video conferencing?

Video conferencing tools are more narrowly focused on replacing the face-to-face in-person interview, and nothing more. Many recruiters are accustomed to conducting interviews via Zoom or Facetime when a candidate wasn't able to travel to meet in person, and now those tools seem like a logical channel for interviewing talent amid and beyond the pandemic.

Video conferencing tools are a great way to build personal relationships with candidates, but they have a lot of limitations when juxtaposed against virtual hiring event platforms. Video conferencing tools, because they are so narrowly focused on just the video portion of the recruiting process, lack all the other features that make managing the recruiting process feasible.

The best way to think about a video conferencing tool is that it may work well for one interview but it is not scalable so as you add more and more video interviews, the process becomes more cumbersome and challenging for the recruiter and the candidates.

On the other hand, virtual hiring event platforms are robust enough to create a superlative candidate experience.

There are also many parts of the hiring event process that video conferencing tools don't have, such as pre-event promotion, in-event experience, and post-event ratings and follow-ups. An isolated video interview via conferencing tools may work for your purposes, but you won't be able to deliver a comprehensive candidate experience without a virtual hiring event platform.

Examples of video conferencing:

- *One-on-one video interview (pre-screening)*
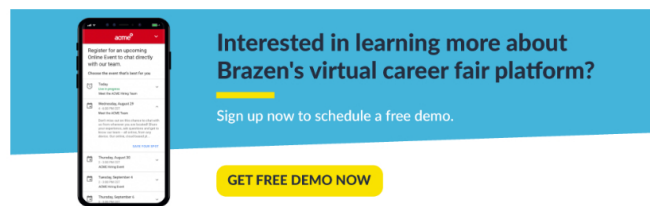- *Video interview with recruiter or hiring manager*

Choosing the right platform

When faced with the decision between virtual hiring event platforms and video conferencing tools, talent acquisition leaders naturally have a lot of questions. You want to understand how each option can help you achieve your talent acquisition goals, and how they advance your overall recruiting strategy. You're also most likely wondering what candidates will think of the experiences they have with each platform.

This guide will answer those and other key questions to help you make the best decision for your organization. To make this information even easier to use, we've divided the discussion into the three main stages of virtual hiring events: before, during, and after.

Here are some of the questions you'll be able to answer once you've read this guide:

- How do the platforms differ in the pre-event stage?
- What kind of candidate experience do the platforms offer?
- What happens after the event on each platform?

Before: The pre-event stage

No matter what kind of virtual recruiting event you're using, there will be some preparation necessary before it happens. The major difference is the breadth and depth of that preparation, which translates into a difference in reach. Virtual hiring events, hosted on a virtual recruiting platform like Brazen, help talent acquisition teams get the word out faster and attract more candidates into your pipeline. You can create custom designed landing pages and customized registration pages, making it easy to promote your events via email or social media and attract top talent.

Since video conferencing is by nature a more one-dimensional tool, there is much less opportunity to create a custom, branded experience. The setup is simple, though. It often takes just a few clicks to create a video conference meeting and copy the link generated by the video platform. But then you'll most likely be dropping that link into an email to just one candidate, and generating a new custom link for each video interview you host.

Although video conferencing can certainly help recruiters increase engagement with candidates in your database, this option is less likely to help you attract new talent or to make much of a difference when it comes to strengthening your employer brand.

During: The in-event stage

Today's smartest recruiters are focused on delivering a unique candidate experience throughout the recruiting process. Virtual hiring events offer an opportunity to create immersive brand experiences with just a bit of setup work. One strategy for this is creating a lobby with branded content that can be used to engage with candidates in addition giving them the option to chat with recruiters. Virtual hiring events can also include pre-recorded welcome videos (ideally starring a hiring manager or other employees) to provide even more context for candidates who want to make informed decisions about which potential employer to pursue.

From the candidate's perspective, video conferencing offers a very limited brand experience and it certainly isn't immersive. While connecting with candidates through video conferencing tools allows recruiters to put faces to names and engage with candidates on a human level, that experience is isolated to the conversation, without any of the valuable resources employers can include in a more robust virtual hiring event or career fair.

After: The post-event stage

Virtual hiring events on platforms like Brazen give recruiters a single location to manage candidate profiles, including ratings after interviews and simple tools for follow-up communications. Building relationships with top talent relies on your ability to move candidates through the recruiting process quickly and with many consistent touchpoints.

Virtual hiring events like Brazen even allow recruiters to review a chat transcript right away, and forward the candidate profile or transcript directly to a hiring manager to expedite consideration. Having these features built in to the virtual recruiting event platform streamlines these important steps and reduces a lot of the administrative work recruiters might have to do without such a robust tool.

On the flip side, when a video conference ends, that's pretty much it. Recruiters will have to do a lot of legwork to track and rate candidates after an interview, and following up and asking for feedback are a whole separate task list. From the candidate's point of view, a disjointed process like this can appear disorganized and creates opportunities for gaps and oversights that might lead to a poor impression of your organization.

Candidate experience

Consistently, more than half of job seekers report that they want clear, consistent communication throughout the recruiting process. Using virtual hiring event platforms to plan and host events helps employers provide that communication.

Customized invitation emails and branded landing pages welcome candidates and give them information to prepare for attending your virtual hiring event. Video and chat resources accessible during events help them find answers to all their pre-interview questions. The option to connect with a live recruiter during a virtual hiring event empowers candidates to take action immediately. And automatic feedback questionnaires give you insights for evaluating the success of past events while informing decisions about planning future events.

Overall, virtual hiring event platforms help organizations deliver the high quality candidate experience that recruiters and job seekers alike have come to expect from your company's hiring events.

As we discussed above, video conferencing offers a way to increase candidate engagement and is still better than a phone call or online chat. **However, video conferencing can't hold a candle to the candidate experience you can create through virtual hiring events.**

Recruiter experience

Recruiting is a challenging job, regardless of what's happening in the world. Amid the pandemic, as many talent acquisition professionals have been forced to adapt to working at home under less than ideal circumstances, the experience of your recruiting team matters just as much as the candidate experience. Now more than ever, TA leaders need to look for ways to streamline a recruiter's job and reduce the cognitive burden of tedious tasks to support a happy, productive remote team.

If you opt to host video conferences for interviews without a robust platform, recruiters will still have to use other tools to share information with candidates, track the results of interviews and candidate ratings, share interview results with hiring managers, and conduct feedback requests and follow-up communications.
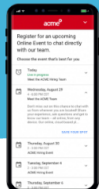
Making virtual recruiting work for you

Deciding which virtual recruiting tools are best for your organization and your talent acquisition team depends largely on your goals and priorities:

- Do you insist on a seamless, immersive brand experience?
- Do you require a platform that is comprehensive and easy to use?
- Are you looking for ways to streamline the process for your recruiters?

Virtual hiring event platforms offer a flexible solution to connect with candidates using text, recorded video, and live video options, so every recruiting team can create events that deliver a custom candidate experience.

Video conferencing options can serve as a pinch hitter when in-person interviews aren't possible and a phone or audio-only call doesn't seem like enough, but the limited features may also limit your results. Ultimately, TA leaders need to choose the option that aligns most closely with your overall recruiting goals and serves the needs you're addressing right now, while preparing you for the future.

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