

Recruitment in the New Normal – Key Takeaways

Panelists: [Grace Koo](#) (KKR) and [Kristin Mannion P'22](#) (Aura Leadership & Development, moderated by [Steve Kapner P'22](#) (Aquent)

What the “new normal” looks like

Since COVID, there has been a greater acceptance of a distributed workforce and the fear of a loss of productivity with people working remotely has proven to be the opposite with an increase in productivity. Many people are overworking since time is not lost due to commuting. Many companies (depending on the industry, some are slower than others) are adopting more flexible programs and structures regarding working remotely and/or developing a hybrid model.

If/when things do return fully to in person or hybrid, companies are having to re-purpose the physical work spaces to accommodate and also honor guidelines of physical distancing.

Starting a new job remotely impacts meeting new colleagues and socialization, therefore companies are finding ways to replicate those times and opportunities that would be naturally easier in person.

A potential advantage to work remotely would be the ability to explore different kinds of roles within the company without having to relocate, if that were required if in person.

The Recruitment Process in the New Normal

The cost of travel has in the past limited employers' on-campus recruitment to a fewer number of targeted schools that are geographically close. Due to COVID, which has eliminated travel to campuses and where the costs are no longer an issue, employers have increased their use of technology to connect with candidates, leading to an opening up of recruitment to any school in the country beyond the schools they previously identified in their target/core or division tiers.

The benefit of this shift is that it increases the access of the open roles to everyone and increases the diversity of the applicant pool, but the challenge for companies is how they are going to filter through the mass increase in applications.

In order to deal with this influx, larger and more resourced companies may utilize AI technology to help with the filtering process.

Many companies are using AI technology vendors to supplement in person assessments such as predictive index and Hacker Rank for coding questions (applies to software engineers/developers). The assessments could be personality based, cognitive or technical. The AI is programmed to read body language, intonation and how you answer questions and provides a score that is sent to the employer to help them filter through large volumes of applications.

Hirevue is a video tool and often used as an interview pre-screen where candidates are asked to video record themselves answering questions that the employer has asked them to respond to.

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Panelists emphasized engaging with the career services office, peers and alumni/parents to practice interviewing and get comfortable sharing your narrative and answering standard interview questions.

Your Narrative

In order to maximize networking efforts and to be effective in your job search and interview, time must be spent on developing your narrative – understanding who you are, your skills and purpose (what you are interested in/want to do). Understanding yourself and defining and clarifying your narrative are very important. Ask yourself, “Who is the person behind the skills?”

Building your network/connections and follow up/through

Develop your network and do informational interviews.

Start local, meaning who is in your “personal advisory board?” Who are those people in your own immediate network that you know, feel comfortable with, are your supporters, reliable and dependable that you can consult with? It is your “personal advisory board” where you will share with them what you’re interested in, asking if they know anyone in your identified interest areas and asking for introductions.

Connect with those outside of your internal network through “cold emailing/calling” via LinkedIn.

Reaching out and networking is a numbers game. Unapologetically pump your network – don’t be shy about asking for a 15–20-minute phone/Zoom call. Connections are there to help you get noticed and move you forward.

There is nothing to lose in reaching out. If someone says, no, you’re in the same place you were when you asked.

If you don’t hear back from someone you reach out to, don’t be afraid to follow up. Sometimes you may need to follow up two, three or four times. There are many things happening behind the scenes at a company or otherwise that may delay someone’s ability to respond.

When you do connect with someone, be clear, concise and compelling with your story and then make sure you continue to nurture that relationship and maintain it.

Interview Deal Breakers

Lack of preparation. Know what you want to do/purpose, your skills, what you’re interested in and research the company and what they do.

Avoid saying you don’t know what you want or that you will do anything – does not reflect well on you and shows a lack of preparation, purpose and initiative.

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In the interview, don't ask the interviewer about work/life balance. The interviewer may question how hard you want to work. Ask about it after you get the offer.

Social Media Profiles

Some employers will occasionally look at social media profiles of candidates using social media screening tools that will be looking for any illegal activity, underage drinking, criminal activity, etc. Even if your profile is private, if someone takes a photo of something on your profile, it's no longer private.

Taking a Gap Year

If you take a gap semester/year while a student:

Employers will be more understanding of it if it occurs as a result of COVID. Be able to talk about how you used your time, what you did, what you learned and gained from this period of time off from school. Use the time to your advantage to do something productive (e.g., building new skills, working on a project, doing an internship).

If you take a gap semester/year post grad: May be more difficult; time off should be used productively (see above).

International Students

Employers may be trepidatious about an international student's visa status, especially in the tech space, due to uncertainty and changes that occur from one administration to a new one.

Job/Internships Search Tips

Finding a job is a resilience game.

Don't be too hard on yourself.

Believe in yourself, turn a no into a yes; be tenacious.

Remain agile and flexible; consider what the future of the role may look like.

Don't be afraid to ask. Give specific examples as to why you versus somebody else.

(For seniors) Double down on your search efforts especially with employers you previously interviewed at but didn't get an offer. They already know you and may be excited to hear from you.

(For sophomores interested in financial services internships) In next two months – applications will open for SUM 22 internships; COVID has accelerated recruitment timeline in the financial services space.