

# Job seekers adapt to challenges of getting hired during COVID-19 pandemic

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SAN DIEGO, Calif. -- Virtual interviews and job fairs are among some of the biggest changes when searching for a new job during the COVID-19 era. And the millions of newly unemployed Americans are vying for fewer jobs.

Christy Schmidt, a 34-year-old who lives in Bend, Oregon, has been scouring job boards ever since she was let go by her employer.

"The amount of jobs up there or jobs that are very close to a fit for me are just non-existent, and I have come to realize that there are tons of other wonderful qualified people applying for the exact same jobs I am," said Schmidt.

She was working as an executive assistant for three vice presidents at Navis, a company that specializes in technology for the hospitality industry. Some of their biggest clients include hotels and resorts.

"It was literally my dream job. It was the best company culture I had ever been a part of, just some of the most brilliant people that were just so down to earth. I loved going to work every single day," said Schmidt.

Schmidt thought working from home would be temporary, just during COVID-19, until the day managers called an all-team meeting.

"And it was very tough for them to tell us we no longer had jobs, that they were doing everything they could to make the company survive," said Schmidt.

After months of searching, she finally found an opportunity that made her hopeful, only to learn it was a scam. When it came time for the virtual interview, the scammer instead wanted to have a text conversation over Google Hangouts.

"All they want is personal information; they did not want to know anything about my experience or background," said Schmidt.

The FBI says hiring scams have spiked during the pandemic.

Now, Schmidt is considering moving out of the small town of Bend to go back home to California, where there are more jobs available.

"Maybe I need to relocate myself just to be able to survive right now," said Schmidt.

Tim Best, CEO of Bradley-Morris RecruitMilitary, says Schmidt is far from alone.

"This isn't going away, so it's not even about, well this is what I need to do now. No, this is a competency we all need to develop because this is here to stay at some level," said Best.

The Army veteran has spent the last two decades helping military veterans and their spouses find careers through massive job fairs at venues like Yankee Stadium.

Now, they're going virtual.

"Really, no one understands what a virtual career fair is until they experience it," said Best.

Employers market their brand in virtual chat rooms, which can lead to a video interview on the spot.

While some sectors, like hospitality and tourism, will likely be slow to come back, essential jobs like delivery drivers are in demand. As well as IT, tech, customer service, online teaching, and construction jobs.

"I've seen this before in previous recessions, where people do rethink their career paths," said Best.

The San Diego Workforce Partnership is offering [on-demand training videos online](#). They're also connecting job seekers with affordable certificate programs to help people learn new skills.

Workforce development partners in other cities are offering similar resources.

Schmidt is broadening her search, considering jobs she might have overlooked before the pandemic.

"Knock on every single door because I know eventually one is going to open, and it's going to be the right fit for you," said Schmidt. "And I'm confident that is out there for me as well."