



Setting the Record Straight: Why You Can't Ignore Job Boards in Your Recruitment Marketing Strategy

We encourage you to share this valuable information with your corporate peers to help drive recruitment marketing success with Big Data.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Channels to tap into talent have constantly evolved throughout history. From handbills to “Help Wanted” signs to “Help Wanted” newspaper ads, all the way to online job boards and social media, the goal has always been to get your job opening in front of job seekers. Where and how job seekers consume that information has changed, but the information itself and the need to advertise it has not changed.

After all, recruiting is and always has been an advertising tactic of an overall marketing strategy, whereby employers seek to get their message (job openings) out to the best talent. The path and mechanisms to do this may change, but the desired outcome is the same: How can you most efficiently and cost-effectively get more quality candidates knocking on your door? Or in other words, how do you allocate your recruiting budget to increase results and return on investment (ROI)?

As HR organizations more readily embrace recruitment marketing as a key to effective talent acquisition, they’ll see that it requires strategic thought to determine what sources deliver the highest volume of quality candidates for their specific opportunities. This means that all recruitment marketers will employ a mix of several different sources, using everything at their disposal to achieve their objectives. The key is to discover and deploy the right mix of marketing channels for your specific needs.

And yes, that includes job boards, which not only remain critical to the recruiting mix, but actually matter even more in today’s world. For the purpose of this white paper, “job board” means any place where jobs are advertised. This includes, but is not limited to, alumni and association sites, large commercial and niche job boards, career destinations or hubs, and social networks. This paper will discuss the business of recruitment marketing (a multi-billion-dollar industry), the evolution of job boards as an effective source for both passive and active candidates, and the role Big Data for HR plays in driving greater recruitment marketing success.

Where Talent Acquisition and Marketing Intersect

As the role and impact of human resources continues to evolve, we have reached a critical crossroads, driven by the corporate mandate that HR become a more strategic business partner. A 2012 report by Right Management and ManpowerGroup asserted that “In the Human Age, the shift in strategic focus from capital to talent is putting business performance results at the door of HR leaders. Success will be measured by their ability to work with the business leadership to...leverage talent as a competitive advantage.”¹

“Monster works to successfully connect people with job opportunities by improving and simplifying how those connections can be made. What started as a job board has evolved to reach, engage and deliver talent on any device, anywhere. We constantly advance our platform to align with the way people use technology. Mobile device usage has exploded, consistent with job seeker activity and optimizing for mobile is key. There’s many more examples like these and ultimately they are indicative of the opportunity ahead for online recruiting.”

-Matt Mund, Senior Vice President, Global Product Management, [Monster Worldwide](#)

The trouble is that finding top talent continues to be a challenge for organizations around the world. Talent acquisition professionals are feeling the heat. It’s understandably tempting under such conditions to turn to “new” methods and technologies to meet this challenge. The fact is, though, that what recruiters need to do now is what recruiters have always needed to do, regardless of method: attract talent by getting their jobs (“message”) in front of the right candidates (“audience”) at the right time. The only new ideas here are the growing acknowledgement that this is a marketing activity and that the channels used to perform these marketing efforts are changing. HR has adopted marketing lingo like “candidate experience”, “branding” and “value proposition”, and now HR is able to adopt marketing strategies for greater recruiting results.

Some might be surprised to learn that job boards remain among the top sources for candidates. Despite what many pundits claim, job boards aren’t dead. It’s important not get stuck on the phrase “job board” and therefore decide it isn’t relevant to today’s recruiting. Job boards are evolving, and they continue to be important

1. “A Pulse on Talent Management in the Year Ahead” by Right Management and ManPower Group

“There are at least 100,000 employment sites now in operation and, yes, they are proliferating. The evidence? The large number of startups that are joining the IAEWS.”

-Peter Weddle, Executive Director,
[International Association of Employment
Web Sites \(IAEWS\)](#)

“The online job space is changing rapidly from the old school job board model to a media destination providing a defined audience with jobs, news, education and collaboration media that speaks directly to them and their profession.”

-Todd Nevins, Co-founder of [icrunchdata.com](#)

channels for job seekers. In fact, estimates on the size of the U.S. recruitment advertising market range from \$3-\$9 billion per year.² Po-TAY-to, po-TAH-to—as outlined in the Executive Summary, job boards are still necessary and effective, as we'll discuss below.

At the end of the day, recruitment marketing is about successfully placing job postings. While job boards aren't the only way, they still represent one of the most efficient and cost-effective channels to do so. What's more, Big Data analytics now enable smarter decision-making to help recruiters narrow-cast, making job boards even more effective—ultimately increasing your recruitment marketing success.

Job Boards Aren't Dead— They're Evolving

You've heard the cry: “Job boards are dead!” And while much has been written about their demise, nothing could be further from the truth. Rather, they are *evolving*.

The argument that job boards are no longer an effective source of hire stems from a perception that companies and candidates have to sift through masses of information to get relevant results; that emerging technology applications, particularly social networking, are replacing online postings; and that job boards simply don't deliver results, yielding a high volume of unqualified candidates at a time when recruiters can't afford to waste their time on such.

Of course, if you have to do a lot of sifting, you would naturally think your results aren't valuable. However, the real issue here isn't the boards themselves but how you use them. Both general job boards, which are evolving and leveraging new technologies to better segment candidate

2. Borrell Associates

“We use dynamic video messaging to market jobs on Job Search Television Network to help recruiters stand out from all the ‘white noise’ of the recruitment marketplace. It’s an evolution in how advertising is written and presented to candidates. Our typical customers see a six to 10 percent increase in their candidate flow when they incorporate video into their advertising.”

-Lindsay Stanton, Chief Client Officer,
[Job Search Television Network](#)

“Job boards remain an essential step in the dance many employers and job seekers perform in order to meet, greet and engage one another. Easily 10 to 20 percent of all hires will be attributed to job boards each year for the foreseeable future.”

-Gerry Crispin, Co-founder of [CareerXroads](#)

profiles, and niche boards make micro-targeting of candidates possible. In addition, the quality of the advertising copy is a factor in the success of any posting. Where and what you post is the real issue.

Yesterday’s job boards represented a place to post static content that would expire after a period of time. Today’s job boards are much more dynamic, leveraging intelligent Internet technology to expand content, create a “push” versus “pull” mechanism for more precise delivery of postings to potential candidates, and even create an interactive experience that draws candidates in. Technology is constantly changing, and job boards continue to adapt in order to survive. In short, they are evolving.

Because you will always need to tap into the market of those actively seeking, you can’t rely on any single channel to meet all your sourcing needs. Job boards are the most likely place to find active job seekers. Any successful sourcing strategy will keep job boards in the mix. Why? Because:

- Used intelligently, job boards are the fastest, **most efficient** way for both employers and job seekers to share relevant information.
- To say that you’ll never use job boards again means that you will never advertise job openings again.
- Ironically, evolved job boards can leverage the same technology that some say is pushing them aside to effectively target **more quality candidates**.

If you need further proof that job boards are very much alive, consider that nearly 20 percent of hires still come from job boards³, and many candidates still make the larger ones—CareerBuilder and Monster, for example—their first stop when seeking a job.

3. "2013 Source of Hire Report," CareerXroads

Another Fallacy: Passive Candidates Are Better Than Actives

There's a blurred line when it comes to recruiting passive versus active candidates, but the bottom line is that sourcing strategies need to consider both.

Obviously, active candidates are more easily identifiable because they are searching online and interacting with your recruitment marketing messages. That's how you know they're interested. A good candidate who has decided to (or is forced to) pursue new opportunities, for whatever reason, is not a bad thing. Why would someone who's employed suddenly become less valuable just because they've peeked over the wall?

Passive candidates—those not actively seeking a job change, but that fit your talent profile—have traditionally been harder to find. But that is changing as the term “passive” is now understood, in light of recent research, as a spectrum rather than one set definition.

A survey developed by specialized staffing service Accountemps asked how comfortable people would be looking for a new job while currently employed, 46 percent of respondents said “Very comfortable” and 27 percent said “somewhat comfortable.” That's 73 percent of “passive” candidates who are open to new opportunities. And depending on their age, workers are willing to look for their next job while at their workplace. For instance, 48 percent of respondents between the ages of 18 and 34 are likely to do so.⁴

eQuest's own research showed that Monster, CareerBuilder and Indeed.com received their highest traffic numbers on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, from computers, during the lunch hour. This points to what would traditionally be called “passive” candidates; they clearly have jobs, but they are also looking at potential opportunities.

No one sourcing channel will fill all openings, so recruiters continue to need a mix of candidate sources, and job boards are one of them. Whether passive or active, job seekers will go to those places where there is relevant job information. Job boards that provide useful content to candidates across the spectrum remain a viable source.

4. Accountemps

“Job boards are evolving. Some will do so successfully (and thrive). Others will fall off the evolutionary ladder and end up in the dustbin of history. I know there will be a whole lot of morphing going on. That conventional job board you knew (and sometimes loved) picks up a new Web 2.0 skin, adds a bunch of content, and calls itself an employment portal. That blue and white aggregator suddenly decides to act like a job board. And that monstrously big job board starts popping up in places like Facebook.”

—from “*Evolution? Devolution? Revolution? What's next for job boards?*” Jeff Dickey-Chasins, [Job Board Doctor Blog](#)

Old Technology? Quite the Contrary

There was a time when job boards were considered “new” technology, appealing to recruiters as an alternative to traditional newspaper classified ads. By generating more response at a lower cost through wider distribution, job boards helped improve results, just as many other innovations have.

Ironically, job boards are now often knocked as “old” technology. With the online landscape changing at lightning speed over the past decade, there's some truth to this. While some job boards look and function as they did when first launched, those that have survived and are even thriving are those that have evolved.

Job boards can actually benefit from technology evolution—and the best ones do. Today's search and filtering systems, for example, help distill the quality of postings and, most important, attract more of the right applicants in real time. As Jeff Dickey-Chasins (also known as The Job Board Doctor) recently wrote: “Never before has the industry been presented with so many options for improving and expanding their services. Whether it's resume parsing, contextual search, ‘talent communities,’ social recruiting, video interviewing and resumes, or AdWord optimization, job boards have access to lots of technology and approaches that promise to improve their ROI for employers.”

Speaking of social recruiting, many recruiters view networks such as LinkedIn and Facebook as forms of job boards (See sidebar “*Is LinkedIn a Job Board?*”), matching candidates with suitable job postings through their profiles, preferences, and contacts.

For their part, candidates don't want to wade through scrolling lists of job openings that may or may not be relevant. They want to quickly view a list of recommended opportunities they know already match their interests, with the ability to

“Although most talent acquisition professionals readily admit that referrals are excellent sources of hire (lower cost, higher quality), relatively few have a well-constructed referral system in place. Job boards could be offering referral networks as part of their service lineup, since they already possess the technology infrastructure and can help sustain a long-term, continued effort.”

—Jeff Dickey-Chasins, [Job Board Doctor](#)

“For recruiting strategies and marketing efforts to be effective, companies must focus on reaching a diverse yet targeted audience, and job boards are a great way to accomplish that. Job boards remain, for both active and passive job seekers, the number one way to learn about and apply for job openings.”

—Jessica Miller-Merrell, SPHR, Author and CEO of [Xceptional HR](#)

immediately connect with more information and content—including via smartphone apps. Ease of use is critical, and today's evolving, technology-driven job boards help enable that.

As a result, we'll continue to see demand for job boards—as a key component to employers' recruitment marketing strategies—drive innovation forward with more integrated technology across websites and social networks.

Focus on Results, Not on Everything

Over time, recruiters have learned that more is not always better. Whereas recruiters equated success with traditional job boards to more response, lower cost, and wider distribution, there's something to be said for quality over quantity.

In fact, there are new expectations for recruiters to deliver more qualified candidates based on specific needs of the position and hiring manager. This has led to the proliferation of niche job boards, which focus on particular groups of candidates to improve the immediacy and relevance for both sides, leading to a higher number of quality applications. While quantity may decrease, recruiters who stay focused on quality tend to enjoy greater success than those who simply seek “more.”

It's not unheard of for companies to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars in a year attempting to get their job postings in front of both active and passive candidates. It's not uncommon to have hundreds of open positions being advertised over the course of a year. While many boards are quite reasonably priced, some postings can cost up to \$1,500 each. That spend is significant and demands results. Therefore, it's critical that talent acquisition teams understand how their talent brand and message resonates with specific candidates on specific channels, to determine—and ultimately increase—their recruitment marketing ROI.

“Big Data and analysis techniques allow us to focus on metrics like ‘Source of Interviewed Applicants’ that reveal costs of each candidate and help us better understand the effort and resources required to get a slate of candidates together.”

—Andrew Gadowski, Chief Advisor, Founder, *Aspen Advisors*

“The failure to appropriately target job postings has led to the common industry idea that ‘job boards’ are dying. Tracking prospective candidates from source of visit through hire has allowed Yoh to fully assess job posting performance and thereby refine our targeting. The result? Yoh has seen radical improvements in applicant quality, the number of hires we make from job boards, Cost Per Hire and Apply to Hire ratios.”

—Cindy Lombardo, Manager of Candidate Marketing at *Yoh*, a Day & Zimmerman Company

Is LinkedIn a Job Board?

Without question, social media has significantly impacted the talent acquisition process, complimenting job boards as a way to effectively target and engage job seekers. Social recruiting, be it through network services, blogs, forums, or other social media sites, enables companies and candidates to connect more easily with one another.

According to a recent survey by Bullhorn, 98.2 percent of staffing professionals said they use some form of social media to find candidates, up from 94 percent in 2011. Furthermore, 97.3 percent of respondents specified using LinkedIn. But social media will not kill off job boards. Crispin and Mehler’s 2013 Source of Hire report shows that only 2.9 percent of external hires are attributable to social media.⁵

Many job boards are actually incorporating social recruiting technology into their sites. Not every candidate has a social media profile, so there are still millions of job seekers effectively using job boards, online resume submission, and the like. What’s more, the classified ad model—proven over centuries—is the model on which job boards are based. Social media will continue to supplement and advance candidate sourcing, but it won’t spell the death of job boards.

So, is LinkedIn a job board? It’s a place where job postings are advertised, so yes, it is. It’s also undeniably a social network. Here is another example of the convergence of recruiting channels, where the sum is greater than its parts. Social networks are taking on job postings, and job boards are incorporating social networking elements.

5. “2013 North American Staffing and Recruiting Trends Report,” Bullhorn

Therein lies an opportunity for recruiters to leverage the now-famous concept of Big Data. Employment data gleaned from thousands, even millions, of online transactions can be leveraged to provide critical information, such as how many times a posting has been viewed and how many click-throughs the posting receives. Employers can see where candidates are coming from and how quickly they respond. Data analysis can also forecast candidate volume and how long it will take to receive the majority of responses for a posting on a given board. More than ever, HR professionals have the opportunity to be informed by predictable trends and make strategic plans in the area of talent acquisition with the help of today's evolved job boards.

Using All Marketing Channels That Work

Recruiting is a form of marketing—always has been, and always will be. The need to market job openings to candidates will never go away. Recruiters, then, should use all marketing channels available to them that deliver results. While there are many other channels that recruiters can tap into, job boards should be considered an integral part of any recruitment marketing strategy, enabling employers to proactively push relevant job postings to larger and more targeted pools of talent. Successful job boards will continue to evolve to meet the increasingly complex needs of employer and job seeker alike.

The emergence of Big Data presents the opportunity to use job boards more effectively by measuring and analyzing results to determine job board placements with the greatest likelihood of success, in terms of generating a higher volume of appropriate candidates.

HR organizations that adapt accordingly and effectively use today's dynamic job boards as part of a multi-channel approach—to drive efficiency, volume, and relevance of online postings—will enhance their recruiting efforts and ultimately drive greater results for their businesses, much to the liking of senior leadership.

“These claims [that job boards are dead] could not be further from the truth. As seen from the front lines of recruitment and sourcing, by those who toil in the business of recruiting and hiring on a daily basis, job boards are more useful than ever.”

—Shally Steckerl, President of [The Sourcing Institute](#)

About eQuest

eQuest is the world's dominant and most utilized job posting distribution company. Its primary customer base consists of the majority of the Global Fortune 500. It also provides job deliveries on behalf of the world's largest Applicant Tracking Systems, ERPs, and job boards—managing thousands of companies through these channels. Present job posting deliveries average 250 million annually. Its Big Data for HR division collects approximately 5 million job board performance statistics weekly—making eQuest the Nielsen Ratings company of the HR industry. Other products include consulting, OFCCP compliance and audit protection, technology services, data analytics, Interactive media representation, SEO, and various predictive tools. eQuest was established in 1994. eQuest can be reached at www.equest.com.



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