

JOB BOARDS: USING THEM EFFECTIVELY IN YOUR JOB SEARCH

Statistically, most jobs are found via networking. That said, there's a place for job boards in your job search. Let's first review some basic information.

How do companies fill positions?

Traditional staffing includes:

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| Recruiters | Advertising |
| Search/Research (Sourcing) | Newspapers |
| Agency (Headhunter) | Magazines |
| Contingency | Movie Theaters |
| Retained | Billboards |
| Contract Recruiter | Employee Referral Programs |
| In-House Recruiter (Employee) | Job Fairs |
| | Internal transfers and promotions |

As the job market grew in the 1990's, companies and agencies started to look to the Internet as another way to publicize openings and "source" or find candidates. In the early days, this was primarily useful for locating technical professionals. As job boards were born and became more sophisticated, they were included as part of an overall healthy staffing portfolio.

Recruiters saw that posting on their corporate website and posting jobs on job boards were relatively inexpensive and reached a global audience. This was extremely important in the peak of the hiring boom.

As hiring reached a frenzy in 1999 and early 2000, companies desperately searched for any candidate with a heartbeat. Candidates were met with multiple offers, inflated titles and salaries, sign on bonuses and stock options. The costs of recruiting soared: each advertising opportunity saw a rise in costs and even employee referral awards were inflated. Career fairs were filled to capacity with employers, but the candidate traffic was small. Utilizing job boards became even more attractive as the capabilities of the services improved.

What's going on with the job boards?

The last few years saw a proliferation of job boards. Some were general, like CareerBuilder or HotJobs, and some catered to specific professions. Job boards offered more than simply posting your resume or employers posting their jobs: they added content to become one-stop-shopping for career related information.

Just as other industries saw mergers and acquisitions, job boards had the same experience. There are fewer new sites and existing sites have not been as profitable as they had been.

How do job boards work?

Job boards have two types of clients: companies and individuals.

Companies post positions and if they still have a recruiter/HR person they can search the resume database without posting. Individuals can post resumes or search for jobs.

Competing for resumes and job postings, job boards offer additional career information and links of interest. Most of the boards offer clients the ability to personalize and create "search agents". For job seekers, the "agent" will include your requirements and qualifications and keywords, and the results can be sent to your designated email address. For companies using agents to locate candidates, the concept is the same.

Job boards are constantly reevaluating what they can offer and their pricing structures. Many boards offer preferential placement of your resume if you pay an "upgrade" fee.

There are websites that will "blast" your resume to thousands of recruiters or corporations for a fee, but I don't recommend doing that. Your resume will be sent to all kinds of places, whether or not it is appropriate for your skills, experience and location.

I keep seeing the same jobs. What's with that?

Some job boards keep postings up too long. The job may have been filled or cancelled but there is no HR person to remove the posting. Sometimes the posting has been paid for a month at a time and you can't remove it sooner. Then there are the job boards themselves that seem to retain postings although they should have expired. When this happens, the job board seems to have more available jobs and appears to be more compelling to possible clients.

Many company postings languish on the job site because they have laid off the recruiter/HR person and no one is left to update the website. No company is posting for fun: there are too many unsolicited resumes and they are bombarded when they post. Some companies think they will hire, but later implement a hiring freeze. They don't remove the posting and are not doing anything with the received resumes.

As a recruiter, I have found resumes, contacted the people only to find that they are in new jobs but forgot to remove the resume or sometimes wanted to see if something different would come along. Same thing.

I've also found that some boards mine resumes from free sites, either fledgling job boards or even your home page, and they put your resume in their database. (If you create a resume on your home page, you'll be easier to find if you create effective metatags and keywords.)

Just the facts, Ma'am.

Many users find that if you solely seek a job online, you will rarely produce results. One study I saw on stated that less than 15% of all jobs are found online. DBM's study found that only 6 percent of hires for management-level jobs currently occur through any Internet site, compared with 61 percent for networking. The percentage of hires made through the biggest job boards was far smaller.

I feel that some of these statistics may be skewed. Many job seekers utilize job boards for research, see interesting companies there, but apply on the corporate website or via networking. Because the typical job seeker may be looking at many sites, they may not note how they learned of the target company or they may feel it seems more impressive to say: "I found you as a result of researching exciting new companies/opportunities/technologies."

Then why, oh why, would I even mention job boards?

Just as you should diversify your investments, you should utilize a variety of methods in your job search. This is just one portion of an effective search. They're great for researching companies and finding out about jobs, plus posting your resume gains visibility. The major boards offer thousands of opportunities and provide an opportunity to get your resume in front of a large pool of potential employers. Don't rely on this as one tool, but as part of your job search strategy.

Because companies are overwhelmed with resumes, sometimes it's easier for a recruiter or hiring manager to search a job board database. Although many companies are not listing their open positions, don't forget that they may still be checking in!

Tips for utilizing the job boards to your best advantage.

Create an effective resume

Many job seekers create a new email address specifically for their job search. If you decide to post your resume, it can be done with limited contact information so that the recruiter must email you. It's a viable alternative as many candidates worry about privacy, but as a recruiter in this market, I'd say this: don't slow down your job search. A recruiter may be less likely to write you than call the next person if your skills are comparable. You can create your own website with your resume on Dice or you can use LinkedIn. Once you have a website - put the url (web address) on your business card and add it to your email signature.

Larger companies scan in resumes to their own retrievable databases. Keep this in mind when you create your resume and follow directions. Some databases request plain text, some have other requirements. Recruiters find your resume based on the keywords you use and the date you post. As a recruiter, I have inserted keywords for the technology terminology of my company, and if I am looking for competitors, I'll insert that company name, as well.

Try to incorporate keywords or skill sets in the body of your resume. You might insert a paragraph at the bottom of your resume including additional keywords or skill sets. Here's an example from a resume I found online:

OTHER KEYWORDS AND SKILLS: seminar developer, seminar courseware writer, user documentation writer, training course documentation writer, seminar instructor, course instructor, training instructor, seminar trainer, online content editor, online content manager, online content writer, internet content editor, internet content manager, internet content writer, internet recruiting trainer, internet recruiting consultant, marketing collateral writer, print collateral writer, javascript, html, Microsoft Office: word, excel, powerpoint, outlook, project, access; visio, photoshop, pagemaker, quarkxpress, filemaker, adobe acrobat, eudora, quickbooks

Determine your job board strategy

Review the available job boards and determine which ones you'll utilize. This might be a combination of general and industry specific job boards. Evaluate your boards on the basis of what you see when you do an initial job search and ask others in your field. My website, www.ourhrsite.com, offers many links to job boards or you can use websites for professional organizations.

Use the career agents

These agents automatically search for new postings and send you an email notification. You can create a general agent, i.e. human resources, USA, or be more specific, i.e. human resources, compensation, comp and benefits, employee relations, recruiter, Mountain View. It takes a little time to create but is worthwhile. Don't rely on agents alone as it may take some creativity and practice to find additional pertinent positions.

Use the job boards for help and research

The major job boards want to keep their loyal customers. It pays them to keep you on their website, so they offer additional services. They provide information about creating resumes, interviewing skills and compensation ranges. Some offer online courses. The boards can be very useful in researching companies so you can send a targeted resume to those companies. Customizing your resume for the job or company is a more effective way of getting the company's attention.

Refresh your resume regularly

Recruiters input keywords and see pages of resumes. Postings are seen in this order:

- upgraded resumes
- date posted

Most major job boards offer "upgrades" for a small fee. This will keep your resume toward the top of the list. Recruiters typically have the option of viewing resumes from the last day, last 7 days, 14 days, one month, or 6 months. Each day, countless numbers of people add their resumes to the pool

of candidates. If you don't want to pay the upgrade fee, you can still stay toward the top if you "refresh" or "edit" your resume daily.

The bottom line

Searching for a new position takes time, effort and a lot of luck. Job boards should be a part of your overall strategy, but don't forget the basics including networking, cold calling and responding to ads. Invest your imagination into your product - you. A potential employer will look at your background, your personality and how you present yourself. And keep this in mind: it's a tough market and many qualified people are searching for positions. Don't get down on yourself and be sure to treat yourself well. It'll help with your health, your attitude and the way potential employers will view you.

About Marcia Stein, PHR

Marcia Stein has worked in the Silicon Valley since 1989 and owns a Human Resources Consulting practice with experience as a Recruiter, Staffing Manager and Human Resources Director. Marcia is an active speaker presents to organizations, corporations and job search groups. She is the founder and organizer of the Silicon Valley Women in Human Resources...and Friends group, a networking, mentoring and educational group for professional women with over 1,500 members. Marcia started and maintains a website for the group and has been recognized by the HR Symposium with the Partners in Innovation Award. She is the author of [*Recruiters on Recruiting*](#), a look into the career paths of different types of recruiters, their tips for job seekers and new recruiters. Her second book is [*Strained Relations: Help for Struggling Parents of Troubled Teens*](#).

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