

JOB BOARDS: USE THEM EFFECTIVELY IN YOUR JOB SEARCH

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

How do companies fill positions?

Recruiters

Agency (Headhunter)
Contingency
Retained
Contract Recruiter
In-House Recruiter (Employee)

Advertising

Newspapers
Magazines
Movie Theaters
Billboards
Job Fairs

Social Media

LinkedIn
Facebook
Twitter
Blogs

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. Early adopters used this primarily to find technical professions. As job boards became more sophisticated and more people had Internet access, many kinds of openings were listed. Recruiters saw that posting on their corporate website and posting jobs on job boards were relatively inexpensive and reached a global audience, contributing to a varied staffing portfolio of tools.

Evolution in job boards.

The last few years saw a proliferation of job boards. Some, like CareerBuilder, were general, 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.

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.

Why do I keep seeing the same jobs?

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. At times, job boards 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.

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 and contacted candidates 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. It's the same concept.

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.)

A few facts

Many users find that if you solely seek a job online, you will rarely produce results. That is to say that some people do find jobs, but I've seen studies noting that less than 15% of all jobs are found online. At nine big public companies, 16 percent of total hires were initiated at the corporate Web site. 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. This information fluctuates, and several current studies indicate 80-90% of positions currently filled are via networking.

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 look for a

personal connection or a LinkedIn contact. 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 or technologies."

Then why write about job boards?

Just as you diversify your investments, you should utilize a variety of methods in your job search. This is just one portion of an effective search. Because they're great for researching companies, finding out about jobs, and posting your resume to gain visibility, it should play a part in your job search strategy. 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

Many job seekers create a new email address specifically for their job search and regularly check that email. If you decide to post your resume, it can be done with limited contact information so that the recruiter must email you. It's an 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. Be reachable.

You can create your own website with your resume on 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 - Word or plain text is best for job boards. (Many recruiters dislike PDFs and many job boards and company websites do not accept them.)

Recruiters find your resume based on the keywords you use and the date you post. As a recruiter, I have inserted keywords such as Illustrator, Fireworks, InDesign, Visio 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 technical section in your resume including additional keywords or skill sets.

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 offers many links to job boards or you can use websites for professional organizations.

Use job search agents

These agents automatically search for new postings and send you an email notification. You can create a general agent, i.e. software engineer, California, or be more specific, i.e. software engineer, Java, Ruby on Rails, 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 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 often.

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

1. upgraded resumes
2. 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 frequently.

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.

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.

BEST OF LUCK!

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