

Suggestions for using Job Boards on the Internet

Several months ago I assisted a couple of high-tech recruiting companies as an Internet researcher. They hired me to locate resumes for them based on short (often too short) descriptions of the positions they needed filled. One of the recruiting companies sent me to a seminar on Internet research that was designed to teach recruiters how to find "passive" candidates - those who weren't on job boards but had a resume on a web site somewhere.

The work I did for the recruiting companies and the conversations in the seminar with the other recruiters (some were from hiring companies and others were from recruiting companies) gave me a new perspective on how the process works from the "other side." I guess it was human nature that because I'm a contractor and therefore often looking for work, I applied what I learned to my own job searches.

Shortly afterwards, a friend who was looking for a job asked for advice. I started listing a few suggestions and the list got longer and longer. During the last Lone Star Chapter STC meeting, I offered to send my list in to Technically Write, so here it is.

I realize that the job market has changed since last summer but there are still jobs out there. I got a great contract in July that was expected to last only 3 months. So far, I'm guaranteed to be there until the end of November and possibly even the end of December. I'm editing my original comments to my friend based on what I will do when I look next time around. I think that sharing this type of information is what makes STC so great. I would love to think that I helped someone find work.

These are my suggestions:

1. **Make sure you are 100% happy with your resume before posting.**
Ask a friend who understands the type of work you do to look at it. Most sites let you paste in your resume. Once you post it to 15 sites you don't want to go through the process of locating and editing each one if you later decide something is not the way you want it or that (yikes!) you had a typo in it.
2. **Always check to see what the resume looks like *after* posting it.**
You can usually choose to "review" it or "edit" it to see how it looks to potential employers. Formatting symbols like bullets often get replaced with odd symbols so you might want to put in dashes in your original doc instead. Sometimes they have confusing fields you have to fill out and when you see how it gets presented, you may decide you need to edit.
3. **Plaster your resume everywhere.**
It doesn't cost anything to post resumes. The recruiters and hiring companies pay dearly (hundreds or thousands of dollars per month for each job board) just for the privilege of viewing resumes. Some companies can only afford one large job bank so if you only post on Headhunter.net and they use Monster.com, they'll never find you. Someone recently said that they were told that it might make them look

desperate if they had their resume on multiple job boards. That may be true but it didn't work that way for me. As with all my suggestions, use your own judgment to decide what's right for you.

4. **If you want to relocate and have a mailing address in the new city, use it.**
They will possibly avoid you if they think they have to relocate you. They may do a search based on the city you live in and they will often look at your current address before deciding whether or not to look at you further. They will always call or email you so it doesn't matter what the mailing address is in regards to their actually contacting you. Most sites have a little "career objectives" section. You could put something in there about how you are in the process of relocating to Austin or wherever and want to work there.
5. **Don't post your references on any of the sites.**
Headhunters like to use this info as a method for finding more potential employees. Also your references probably won't like being plastered all over the Internet. When you're actually contacted regarding a specific position they'll ask for resumes and that's the time to provide it.
6. **Get a free Hotmail, Yahoo, or whoever, email address to use just for job searching.**
Regardless of whether you want to remain confidential, it's not a bad idea to get a free Hotmail or Yahoo email address to use just for job postings. That way it doesn't go through your company mail server when they try to contact you (some companies use sniffers (email searches) to find out who's receiving emails about jobs. Even if you aren't currently working, some of the job bank postings result in junk mail. Anyone who pays to access the job boards can access your resume. Do I need to mention that you check it at least daily for responses? Once you've found work and don't want to be contacted, shut down the email address.
7. **Skip this if you're not worried about confidentiality.**
People have told me that they didn't want to post their resumes because they thought their employer might find out. There are several ways to deal with this problem. First of all, there is usually an option on each job bank to have your name and even contact info omitted. For example on headhunter.net you can set it up so that the person who wants to inquire about you sends an email to an automatically assigned headhunter.net email address and it gets forwarded to you. If it turns out to be your current boss, just reply via your Hotmail mailbox and say you're not interested. I've seen some resumes posted with "confidential" as the name of the current employer. So far I haven't had any recruiters tell me that they had a problem with that.

Some sites even allow you to hide your resume from specific company names that you type in. Of course, don't use your name as part of your new email address if you really want to remain confidential to anyone searching the job banks. And

remember to check that you didn't accidentally paste in your name or contact info when you pasted in your resume.

8. Use keywords.

Most job banks allow full-text searches of your resume. Be sure to put in all the buzzwords they might look for. I've seen resumes by people smart enough to add a section at the bottom called "Keywords" where they put in such words and phrases as "training, training developer, instructor, courseware developer, information designer, winhelp, HTML, FrameMaker" and so on. See the next suggestion when determining keywords.

9. Never underestimate the ignorance of the person searching for resumes.

I had one recruiter who asked if I knew "Windows" because the client asked for "Windows Help Developers." He was actually one of the recruiters that got me an interview and a job offer. Be patient with these clueless people - they may represent a great job and are just doing searches on resumes based on how the client worded their job request.

10. Don't let the sites limit you.

If you are willing to take a contract or perm position and the site only lets you choose one of these options, post your resume a second time and select whichever you didn't choose before. As far as I know, all sites let you post more than once. Also if you want to select more than one job classification and the site only lets you choose one, same solution. You can even post different resumes. I do that to emphasize my CBT and courseware development skills in one and my Help development and other technical writing skills in another.

11. You don't have to keep your resume short anymore.

They often don't print it and don't mind it longer as long as it has all the information they need. It used to be that the general rule was to keep your resume very short because they were hard copy. Now recruiters generally agree that longer is a good thing. It's all online so they don't care if it is more than one "page." I've had more than one recruiter tell me they hated it when people had obviously tried to get their resume all on one page.

12. If you're a citizen, be sure to let them know.

Almost every site has a check box or some indicator of whether you are a citizen. Be sure to check this if you are, it is often one of the required criteria. It's sometimes easy to miss but it's very common for recruiters to search for only US citizens.

13. Do not include your Social Security Number.

You probably all know this already. Never post your SSN on the Internet anywhere.

14. Update as required.

Each site has its own method of purging old resume information. Most will delete your resume after 60 days. Be sure to update as necessary if you haven't found a position.

15. Be very careful with color.

Most people printing your resume will not be printing it in color. Don't use color or at least print it in black and white to check the results. (Some colors print as a light gray and are not easy to read.)

16. Be patient if the screens seem to load slowly on some of the job banks.

Sometimes it takes a little longer to load than you think is acceptable. They may be updating it or have heavier traffic than they are designed for.

17. No gaps in work dates is important.

One negative is for any gaps in employment history. If you have periods of unemployment, try to explain them. For example, if you took some time off from working to complete an education, etc.

18. Make your web accessible.

If you have a web site with your resume on it, use metatags to get included in search engines and register with all of the search engines you can.

Sites I've used	
http://www.headhunter.net	http://www.justtechwriterjobs.com/jtwrj.nsf
http://www.monster.com	http://www.informationweek.com/career3/
http://www.net-temps.com (don't let the name fool you, it's a great job site)	http://searchtechjobs.com/
http://www.hotjobs.com	http://www.jobbankusa.com/
http://www.careerzone.com	http://www.computerjobs.com
http://www.jobsonline.com	http://www.flipdog.com
http://www.accenture.com/ (formerly called Arthur Anderson Consulting)	http://www.engineeringjobs.com/
http://www.dice.com	http://careers.yahoo.com/

There are tons more sites if you look for them may be local to your area. Be proactive – use the major search engines and look for more jobs and job sites. I also used the Web to locate software companies in my area and sent resumes to the ones I liked best. This got me one interview and a job offer even though their site didn't list any available positions. Also, watch the listserv, Yahoo Groups, and so on lists for job postings (teacher-l, framemaker, winhelp-l.)

Well, that's all I could think of. Good luck and if anyone finds a position based on any information in this article, I'd be so pleased if you'd let me know at jbrody@futureimpact.com - my *real* email address ;-)