

NURSE RECRUITMENT



How to transform job postings into
an effective recruiting tool.

Introducing TooBusyWorking.com.

Chris Taylor, Vice President
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*"You are a post-consumption consumer.
You have everything you need,
and most everything you want.
Except time."*

Seth Godin, *Purple Cow*

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Introduction

Every year about 34,000,000 Americans (approximately 20% of the workforce) change jobs.¹

Given the incredible number of job changes, job-posting sites could (and should) have an enormous, positive impact on our society. Instead, career sites that once held great promise as an employment resource have morphed into aggressive sales/marketing organizations. It is no secret that job-posting sites have not attained their early promise. The CAREERXROADS 6th Annual Sources of Hire Survey provides a reference point for understanding the limited impact job-posting sites have on the employment marketplace:

- Only 7.1% of all external hires were attributed to the three largest online job-service destinations (Monster®, CareerBuilder® and Yahoo! HotJobs®).
- 5.6% of all external hires were attributed to niche sites.

In Part 1: Why job-posting sites don't work, we argue that the business model employed by job-posting sites ensures that these sites will never live up to their early promise. We will also discuss why job-posting sites are not effective in reaching the passive job market.

In Part 2: Re-thinking the job-posting paradigm, we briefly discuss "the long tail of recruiting" and its impact on recruiting.

¹ Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Job Opening and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS).

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How to transform job postings into an effective recruiting tool.

Part 1: Why job postings don't work.

Job-posting sites don't have many jobs.

You only have to consider one fact to understand why job-posting sites are not effective in nurse recruitment. Contrary to common belief², only a small fraction of open nursing jobs are actually posted to any given job board.

Given the large number of nursing openings, you would expect that there would be many more nursing jobs posted online. Certainly, job-posting sites give the impression of having an almost unlimited supply of jobs. But when you compare the number of positions posted to job boards to the number of jobs concurrently posted on employers' Web sites, the disparity is evident.

Our study, which was conducted in August 2007, revealed that only a small fraction of available hospital-based nursing openings are posted to Monster.com®, CareerBuilder®, HotJobs® or Nursing Spectrum® (Nurse.com).

[See chart on the following page]

In our view, the reason job-posting sites have so few postings for hospital-based nursing jobs is due to the following:

1. Revenue Model - Contrary to common belief, job postings are expensive. The cost of a single, 30-day job posting can range anywhere from \$300 to \$500. While larger advertisers receive discounted contract rates, the cost of posting all of an employer's openings to a job board can be quite expensive.

2. Fractured marketplace - Even if an employer were willing to allocate the funds to post all of their open positions, where would they post? As our survey indicated, the job-posting market is so fractured that employers would need to post to a half-dozen sites to ensure broad coverage.

3. Time-consuming - Beyond the financial burden, the amount of time it would take to post all of an employer's open positions to multiple job sites is prohibitive.

It is interesting to note that traditional job-posting sites (Monster, CareerBuilder, Nurse.com, etc.) share a revenue model with the media they replaced: newspapers. Both job-posting sites and newspapers charge employers on a per-placement basis.

This traditional revenue model stands in contrast to the pay-for-performance model used by Google. In Google's model, users are only charged when a transaction is consummated. There is no charge for simply posting information to the Web.

The **pay-for-placement** revenue model employed by job boards unnecessarily limits the number of job postings available to job seekers. The pay-for-placement revenue model also conflicts with one of the Internet's defining characteristics: information aggregation. Imagine the impact if Web sites such as Google, Yahoo, and MySpace charged users to post their content.

² 67% of surveyed nurses estimated that employers posted 50% or more of their open nursing positions to job boards. In reality, less than 10% of available nursing jobs are actually posted to the leading job-posting sites. See chart on last page of this document.

Percent of nursing jobs posted to the leading job boards and to TooBusyWorking

Hospitals within a 35-mile radius of Philadelphia, PA

- Lists less than 10% of hospital's nursing jobs (Red)
- Lists 10 - 50% of hospital's nursing jobs (Orange)
- Lists 51 - 75% of hospital's nursing jobs (Blue)
- Lists 75% or more of hospital's nursing jobs (Green)



Source: TooBusyWorking study, August 2007

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Content Anarchy

The similarity between newspapers and job-posting sites extends beyond their revenue model. Like newspapers, job boards serve as an intermediary between prospective employees and employers.

As an intermediary, job-posting sites are responsible for facilitating communication between these groups. Unfortunately, just as newspapers do not impose control over the content of advertisements, job boards do not exercise control over the content or quality of their job postings. The result is content anarchy.

More often than not, critical job information (shift/schedule, practice area, etc.) is missing, misleading or difficult to locate. The lack of content standards makes it very difficult and time-consuming for nurses to find the information they seek.

The impact of this content anarchy extends beyond any single employer. In *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell described the “Broken Windows Theory” as a way of explaining declining neighborhoods:

If a window is broken and left unrepaired, people walking by will conclude that no one cares and no one is in charge. Soon, more windows will be broken, and the sense of anarchy will spread from the building to the street on which it faces, sending a signal that anything goes...This is an epidemic theory of crime. It says that crime is contagious—just as a fashion trend is contagious—that it can start with a broken window and spread to an entire community.³

The analogy of broken windows and declining neighborhoods easily translates to job-posting sites. Job postings are characterized by vague/missing information, poor formatting, errors in grammar, punctuation and content, and out-of-date job openings. In addition to these obvious errors, our survey of job postings on Monster, CareerBuilder, HotJobs, and Nurse.com also revealed the following issues that negatively impact nurse recruitment:

- **Less than 50% of job postings list the nursing practice area (e.g., pediatrics, emergency) on the search results page.**
- **Less than 1% of job postings list both practice area and schedule (e.g., weekends, night shift) on the search results page.**

The failure to list practice area and schedule information on the search results page means that nurses are forced to go back and forth from the search results screen to the job-posting page in a frustrating quest to find basic job information that should be immediately visible.

On average, a job seeker spends over 14 minutes⁴ each time they visit a job-posting site. Holding visitors captive for an extended period allows job-posting sites to serve additional advertisements for credit cards, online education, mortgages, etc.

In 2006, job-posting sites made hundreds of millions of dollars serving a variety of pop-ups, banners and an array of animated ads to job seekers.

In our view, the lack of relevant job details, coupled with time-consuming processes, results in a user experience that fails to engage passive job seekers. The current generation of job-posting sites is built on the premise that job seekers will trade their time and attention for access to job listings.

³ *The Tipping Point, How Little Things Make a Big Difference*; Malcolm Gladwell, Published by Little, Brown and Company.

⁴ comScore Media Metrix, January 2006. This figure is a consolidated average of minutes per user for CareerBuilder, Monster and HotJobs.

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However, the fact that job seekers are willing to trade their time for employment information shouldn't be confused with the notion that these individuals don't value their time. As Seth Godin reminds us, ***"Post-consumption consumers have everything they need...except time."***

Active, Passive & Missing Job Seekers

In the recruiting world, we often describe job seekers as "active" or "passive." The conventional wisdom is that at any given time, active job seekers comprise 12% to 20% of the labor market. The vast majority of nurses who visit job-posting sites are not active job seekers. They are simply looking for information. They are doing some comparison shopping. They are looking to see if their employer or a competitor is hiring. It is important to remember when attempting to communicate with nurses that many of these individuals have two full-time jobs: one at the hospital and the other in their homes. Nurses are busy people who place a premium on their time.

The importance of providing nurses with a more compelling manner of viewing job openings cannot be overstated. In our TooBusyWorking Nursing Survey, **over 70% of respondents said they would view job information on a weekly or daily basis, if the information was delivered in a fast, convenient manner.**⁵

The description of job seekers as active or passive is obviously oversimplified and, in a discussion of nurse recruitment, it can be very misleading. **About twenty percent of all registered nurses are not active or passive—they are missing.**

In the Philadelphia metropolitan area, there are approximately 14,000 RNs who are not employed in nursing.⁶

While it is unlikely that the vast majority of these RNs are looking for full-time nursing positions, it is not unreasonable to assume that some of these nurses might be available for part-time and per diem positions.



"Just looking."

In order to engage and retain the interest of a passive and missing job seeker, it is necessary to provide them with the information they are seeking in a fast, convenient manner that respects their privacy.

Nurses who visit job-posting sites want specific information about the shifts, schedules and commuting distances within their practice area. And they want this information fast!

Eventually, these nurses will want additional information about an employer's clinical environment, vacancy rates and compensation practices. However, it is critical to remember that nurses typically use practice area, shift/schedule and commuting distance as their initial job-search criteria.

At this point, they are not looking to be sold or to engage in a dialogue. They would prefer to remain anonymous.

⁵ TooBusyWorking Survey of Nurses - August, 2007 (see charts on last page of this document).

⁶ There are approximately 65,000 registered nurses who live within a 35-mile radius of Center City Philadelphia. Using percentages from The National Sample Survey of Registered Nurses (<http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/healthworkforce/reports/rnpopulation/preliminaryfindings.htm>), we estimate that there are 14,000 nurses who are not employed in nursing.

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Just-in-Time Information

The key to recruiting passive and missing job seekers is to keep them engaged. Job-posting sites can engage readers by giving them the information they want, not the information they want them to want. Unfortunately, most job postings intersperse information job seekers want (shift, schedule, etc.) with information that job seekers don't yet care about. Job boards would do better to adopt just-in-time information processes. Just-in-time information processes allow users to access additional information at their pace and at their discretion.

It is important to remember that Web site visitors do not read...they scan. Extraneous information (including employer branding) is just getting in the way.

The common practice of combining basic job information (shift, schedule, practice area) with branding information and boilerplate job descriptions ensures that nothing will resonate with job seekers. It is far better to provide your audience with basic job information in an unencumbered format and then to allow your audience to decide whether they have the time and inclination to read more about your organization.

One of the benefits inherent in this progression is that nurses, who choose to read your branding information because they are interested in a specific job opening, will be genuinely interested in learning more about your organization. You will have captured more than their time. You will have captured their attention.

Job-posting site abandon rates⁷ are through the roof.

Should a nurse choose to run the job-posting-site gauntlet of too few jobs and poor usability, there is still another hurdle they must overcome: the online application.

At some point in time, job seekers will want to engage your organization in a dialogue. Instead of thinking of these individuals as job candidates, you should consider them prospects. You are now entering a critical junction in your relationship with this prospective employee.

While there are virtually no statistics in the public domain that detail the abandon rates for either job-posting sites or corporate employment sites, it is generally estimated that the abandon rate for people filling out online employment applications is somewhere between 75 and 95 percent. This means that 8 out of every 10 individuals who were initially interested in applying for a position with your company abandoned the process before it was completed.

⁷ Abandon rate is the percentage of visitors who leave your Web site before they complete their intended task.

There are three reasons why job seekers abandon the application process:

1. From a user experience perspective, most online job applications are just awful.

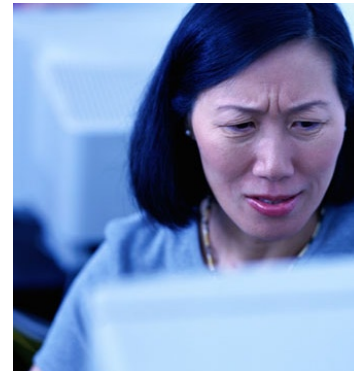
Online job applications practically guarantee that job seekers will not connect with your organization via your Web site. Employers need to provide job seekers with a fast, convenient alternative to the online application. This process should be limited to a single page and should not take longer than one minute to fill out. They should not ask more than 5 to 6 questions (beyond contact information). Answers to sensitive questions (current employer/references/current salary) should be optional.

2. There is no human feedback.

Beyond a computer-generated e-mail, job seekers have no idea of the status of their application. Psychologists describe three types of feedback: positive feedback, negative feedback and extinction (no feedback). By far the most debilitating form of feedback is extinction. The lack of meaningful feedback discourages job seekers (particularly passive and missing job seekers) from revisiting job-posting sites.

3. The vast majority of job seekers do not think of themselves as applicants.

They are prospects. They are browsers. They are “just looking.” Filling out an application is indicative of a commitment that these individuals are not ready to make.



Job seekers often suffer from “application frustration.”

Job-posting sites provide few metrics and virtually no benchmarking services.

Despite their early promise, job boards do not provide meaningful metrics or support for benchmarking services. The reason job boards have not become an effective metric/benchmarking resource is a result of the following:

- Critical data such as location (zip code), practice area, shift/schedule preferences, education and years of experience are not captured.
- Job boards do not exercise control over the formatting of job postings. Without this standardization, it is very difficult to organize, manage and compare the data.
- The pay-for-placement business model limits the number and type of positions that employers are willing to advertise. The fact that only a limited set of job postings is represented makes it difficult to draw conclusions.
- Job postings are diffused to a variety of job-posting sites, each of which has its own job-posting standards.

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Part 2: Re-thinking the job-posting paradigm

The long tail of recruiting.

In October 2004, Chris Anderson wrote an article in *Wired* magazine that described Web-based enterprises such as Amazon, eBay and Netflix as having “long tail” business models. Unlike conventional bricks-and-mortar businesses (which were bound by limited shelf space), these virtual businesses could provide shoppers with almost unlimited selection.

*Unlimited selection is revealing truths about what consumers want and how they want to get it in service after service, from DVDs at Netflix to music videos on Yahoo! Launch to songs in the iTunes Music Store and Rhapsody. People are going deep into the catalog, down the long, long list of available titles, far past what’s available at Blockbuster Video, Tower Records, and Barnes & Noble. And the more they find, the more they like. As they wander further from the beaten path, they discover their taste is not as mainstream as they thought (or as they had been led to believe by marketing, a lack of alternatives, and a hit-driven culture)...Many of our assumptions about popular taste are actually artifacts of poor supply-and-demand matching—a market response to inefficient distribution.*⁸

Traditional retailers have had to adjust their business models to reflect the realities of the digital marketplace. Likewise, employers have to give serious thought about the implications of the long tail on candidate sourcing and recruitment marketing.

While virtually every employer now utilizes some form of Web-based sourcing/marketing, very few employers have deployed a business model that reflects the impact of the long tail on candidate recruitment.

Historically, recruitment marketing activities have been driven by a combination of internal demand and institutional urgency (e.g., hiring managers pressuring human resources). Employer expenditure on relatively high-cost advertising vehicles, such as newspapers, radio and direct response, is a reflection of this urgency. Employers do not advertise all of their job openings, because all open requisitions do not rise to the same level of urgency.

This paradigm was appropriate in a pre-digital world when there was no efficient means of matching supply (employees) with demand (employers). In the pre-digital world, the vast amount of a recruiter’s time has been focused on supporting urgent job openings. But, just as with retail businesses, this method of organizing recruitment activities is fundamentally inefficient and reflects “poor supply-and-demand matching.”

The challenge in the digital world is to realign your sourcing/recruitment practices around the supply (employee) side of the equation as opposed to the demand (employer) side of the equation. The ability of the Internet to inexpensively communicate all of your open positions means that employers must be able to exploit recruiting opportunities as they present themselves. This means that organizations should allocate resources to exploit hiring opportunities that occur when job seekers are applying for positions that are located further down the tail.

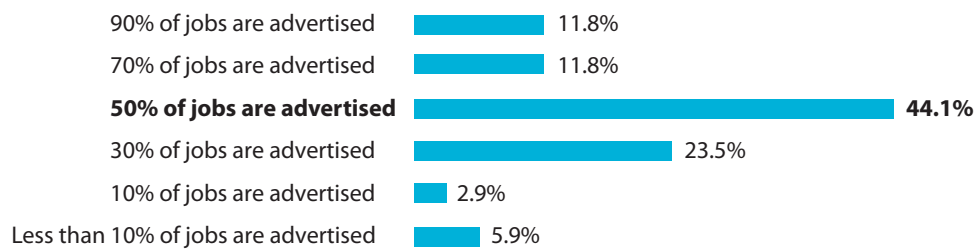
A consequence of leveraging the long tail is that employers will reduce their sourcing costs and will have greater leverage in negotiating compensation issues with prospective employees.

TooBusyWorking.com was designed to leverage the long tail of recruiting. **If you are interested in discussing these concepts further, please contact Chris Taylor at ChrisTaylor@TooBusyWorking.com.**

⁸ <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/12.10/tail.html>

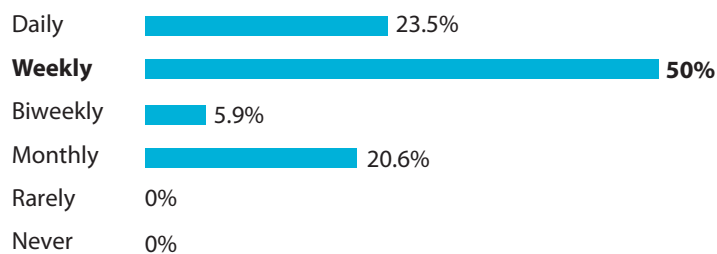
Additional Charts

Nurses' estimates of the percent of available nursing openings that are advertised on major job boards



Source: TooBusyWorking survey, August 2007

If access to job information was fast and convenient, how often do you think nurses would view it?



Source: TooBusyWorking survey, August 2007