



TALENT ACQUISITION

Niche Job Sites Still Valuable as Legacy Boards Fade



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Smaller, atypical job boards segmented by industry and region help target relevant talent but require more proactive work from recruiters to be truly effective.

Staffing firm Randstad's 2016 acquisition of an ailing Monster—one of the original behemoth online job boards—and indications that the sole remaining mega-board CareerBuilder is also for sale have reignited discussions on the recruiting blogosphere about the decline of the model.

"The big job boards are not exactly the darlings of the recruitment industry these days," said Chris Russell, a recruiting technology and job board consultant with RecTech Media, based in Trumbull, Conn. Russell curates a [free database of more than 1,100 job boards](#).

"Recruiters are balking at their high prices and the many unqualified candidates that they generate."

But savvy talent acquisition professionals know that not all job boards are waning, and in fact, smaller niche boards that cater to specific regions, membership associations, specialized industries and types of contracts are a valuable tool for recruiters. Examples of niche boards include [AllRetailJobs](#), [CollegeRecruiter](#), [JobsInLogistics](#), [Medzilla](#), [GitHub](#) and [MinnesotaJobs](#).

"Niche job boards are particularly useful for cutting through the clutter and finding talent for hard-to-fill roles, specialized positions, specific industries—or to tap into unique candidate audiences, such as military veterans," said Susan Vitale, chief marketing officer at Matawan, N.J.-based recruitment software provider iCIMS.

"Niche boards will always play a part in recruitment advertising," Russell agreed. "By posting jobs or searching resumes on these sites, the employer has access to a targeted pool of candidates on demand."

[SHRM members-only how-to guide: [How to Target Passive Job Seekers](#)]

But recruiters might be wasting their time if they treat these sites as they would Monster or CareerBuilder. "If you are going to a niche board and throwing up a generic job ad and expecting big results, you're probably going to be disappointed," said Jessica Nettleton, recruitment media strategist at end-to-end recruitment services firm Decision Toolbox.

"If recruiters actively source from niche boards and proactively engage with potential candidates, then [the boards] can be a huge value," she continued. "It's not a 'post-and-pray' situation. You won't reach the numbers that you would by using a bigger job board, but you will probably reach the right candidates. If recruiters do the work, they will see a ROI [return on investment]."

Quality over Quantity

Recruiters are often frustrated with having to sift through a massive amount of unqualified applicants to find suitable candidates. Niche boards don't boast the traffic of sites like CareerBuilder and Monster but are more likely to attract candidates with specialized skills and relevant experience, leading to lower cost-to-fill and higher quality-of-hire, according to experts.

Amber Hyatt, SHRM-SCP, director of product marketing for SilkRoad, a talent management system, noted that niche job boards may be a particularly effective way for organizations to snag candidates in high-demand industries, or to help ensure that companies meet their compliance goals regarding diverse candidates and veterans.

A recent survey conducted by iCIMS revealed that military veteran job boards are one of the top sources veterans use when searching for a new position. "Employers should make it a priority to showcase their brand on these types of niche job boards to find and attract best-fit talent," Vitale said. iCIMS partners with job-distributing engines like JobTarget and eQuest to enable employers to post their jobs on many boards, including niche sites.

"The targeted aspect is the main benefit, whether we are talking about an industry-specific candidate or one where location is a big factor," Russell said. He added that in his experience, niche sites are more approachable and do more to engage their clients. "One of the big ways they contrast with bigger sites is customer service. When I ran my boards in the 2000s, I knew a lot of my customers by first name and I also met many of them in person."