



2020

Recruitment Marketing Benchmark Report



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A Note to Our Readers

Welcome to the 2020 edition of Appcast's annual **Recruitment Marketing Benchmark Report**. In an increasingly tight labor market, adopting and understanding the performance of recruitment advertising is crucial to driving better ROI and ensuring you get the candidates you need to fill open roles. This report will help you understand how, when and where to reach your target job seekers and, based on geographical and market factors, how much you may need to pay to reach them. In an effort to make this report increasingly actionable to all readers, please make note of the following:

- The data in this report provides a strong framework for benchmarking your recruitment marketing performance and understanding the behavior of job seekers but remember, they are benchmarks. As your recruitment strategy matures, we encourage you to track and measure your data to realize the absolute best performance of *your recruitment marketing*.
- We encourage you to look at the data in this report through the lens of your hiring needs and goals: Do you need more candidate volume? Do you struggle to attract quality applicants? Are there particular cities or states in which you are growing or expanding? Taking this approach to data will help you prioritize and action the insights you find here.
- On every page of this report, you will see a brief overview of the data but in addition, we've also included 'Our take on the data' (where appropriate) and 'What does this mean for you?' as a means of helping you digest and make sense of what the data is telling us.
- Many of the data views included in this report look at apply rates, which is defined as the number of people who actually submit an application after having clicked on your job ad, represented as a percentage. This is one of the most effective metrics in understanding the performance of your job ads but that being said, you should also look to measure and optimize conversion rates (of which apply rate is one) throughout your candidate funnel. This will allow you to understand where candidates are dropping off and, regardless of market factors, where you may be able to improve conversion rates by reviewing your apply process.
- In the coming months, we plan to take a deeper dive into our data! Watch for more insights on: how the unemployment rate impacts your ability to acquire candidates, key industries and roles (i.e. healthcare, transportation, etc), job title and description keywords, improving mobile apply rates, and much more.



Executive Summary

- With unemployment hovering around a 50-year low (3.5%) in 2019, this has continued to impact a recruiter's ability to engage and attract candidates, and it has also made it more expensive to do so.
- Average CPCs (cost-per-click) are flat (overall, only increasing to \$0.71 in 2019 from \$0.70 in 2018) and have been relatively the same over the four years Appcast has produced this report. Additionally, apply rates have dropped, meaning that an employer's cost per applicant has increased. In other words, you are paying more to get less.
- Mobile apply traffic continues to increase year over year, highlighting the importance of building an apply process that is aligned with changing job seeker behaviors and expectations.
- Monday is still (similar to our 2019 report) the best day to drive applications from job seekers but interestingly, the percentage of mobile applies are highest over the weekend.
- Understanding the timing (days of the week or month) of when most employers are bidding for candidates in the market may allow you to adjust or pace your bids to align to those times when there is less competition.

The takeaway

In the grand scheme of 'recruiteconomics', we see that at the same time demand for candidates is increasing, the supply of candidates has dropped, meaning it is more difficult to acquire candidates. If you want to change the outcome of your recruitment advertising, you either need to bid more (than your competitors) or look at how to impact apply rates in order to 'get more bang for your buck'. Flip ahead to the next page as we explain this in more detail.

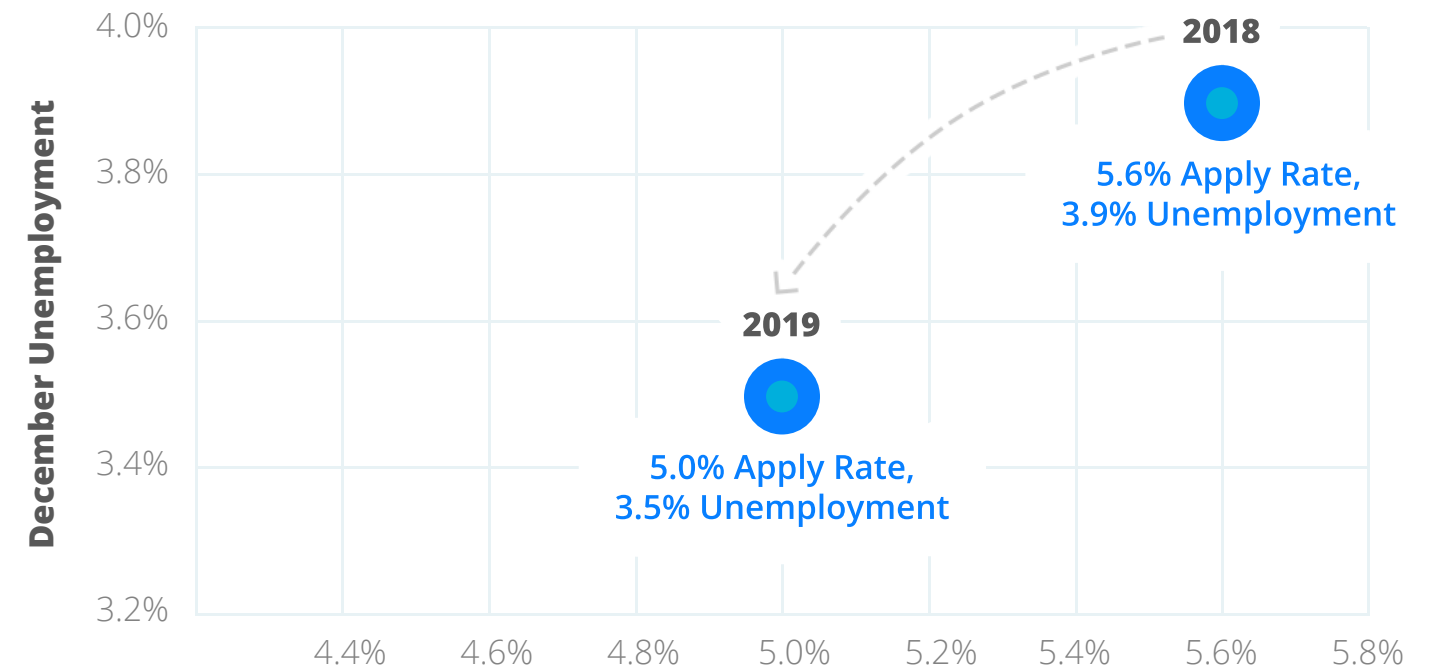
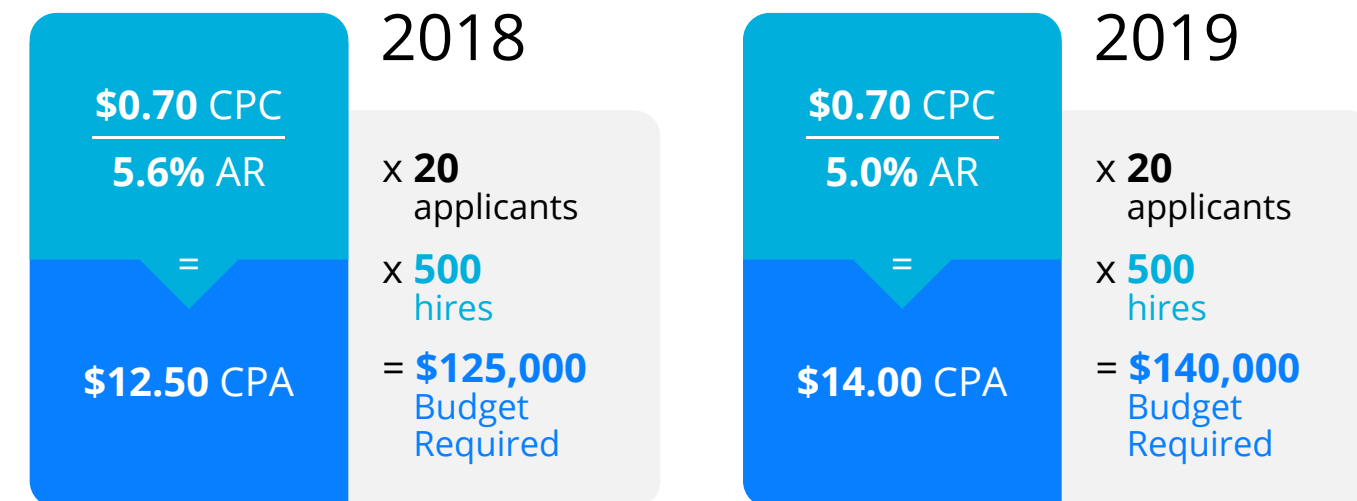


The Case for Increasing Your Investment in Candidate Acquisition

Over the course of our research, we've noticed a direct correlation between the unemployment rate and apply rate. As a result, this means you pay more for candidates. Simply put, a drop in apply rate (AR) means that you get fewer candidates from the same amount of clicks, meaning your cost per application (CPA) increases. Notice in the example below, the CPC is the same but because of the drop in apply rate, even just by 0.6%, it changes the cost of an application significantly, especially when scaled across 500 hires.

Note: This example assumes that an average of 20 applicants are needed to make a single hire and also that a \$0.70 CPC is competitive in the role, location or industry in which you are hiring.

Budget Required = **CPA** x # of applicants needed per job x # of hires to make.



In this competitive labor market, you have three options for changing the results you get from your recruitment advertising:

1. Increase your CPC bids.
2. Buy media on a cost-per-applicant basis to mitigate the risk of poor conversion rates from click to apply, ensuring that your investment has an actionable result - applicants.
3. Make changes to your apply process to improve your conversion rate.



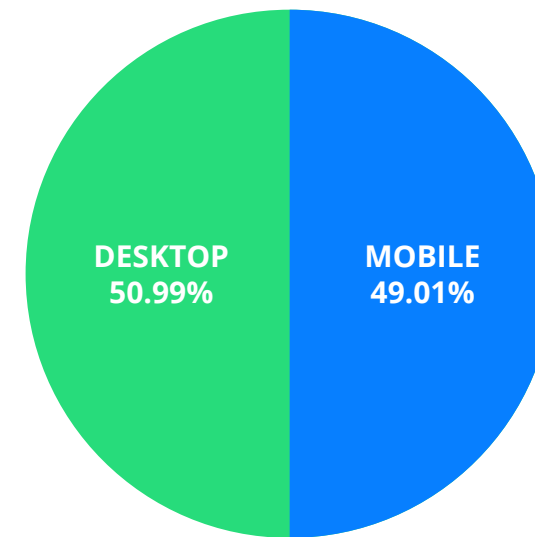
Scope & Methodology of the Report

What's in the report?

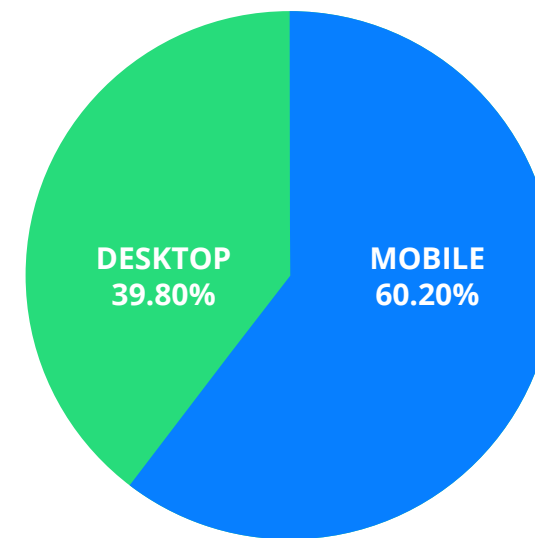
Appcast's analysis for the **2020 Recruitment Marketing Benchmark Report** is comprised of 2019 job ad data from nearly 1,000 employers in the United States. In total, there are 139 million clicks and 7 million applies included in the study. Changes to our existing customer base year-over-year, as well as changes in the marketplace, contributed to the analysis of this job ad performance data.

Methodology

For this report, Appcast analyzed 2019 pay-for-performance (PFP) job ads from nearly 1,000 employers across every major industry. Duration-based postings and slots were not included. Only job ads purchased on a performance basis – cost-per-click (CPC) or cost-per-applicant (CPA) were factored into this study. All mobile data included iPads and tablets. Data from gig organizations has been included only in areas that were analyzed by industry; gig data has not been included within overall perspectives as the behavior of job ads in that space is an outlier when stacked against traditional employers.



7 Million Applies



139 Million Clicks

Year-Over-Year Trends

2017 - 2019





Desktop vs. Mobile Apply Rates: 3-Year Review

Overview

Apply rates continue to fall on both desktop and mobile devices. From the previous year (2018), there was a 6.0% decrease on desktop and a 12.8% decrease on mobile.

However, from 2017 to 2019, we've seen decreases of 33.7% on desktop and 19.6% on mobile.

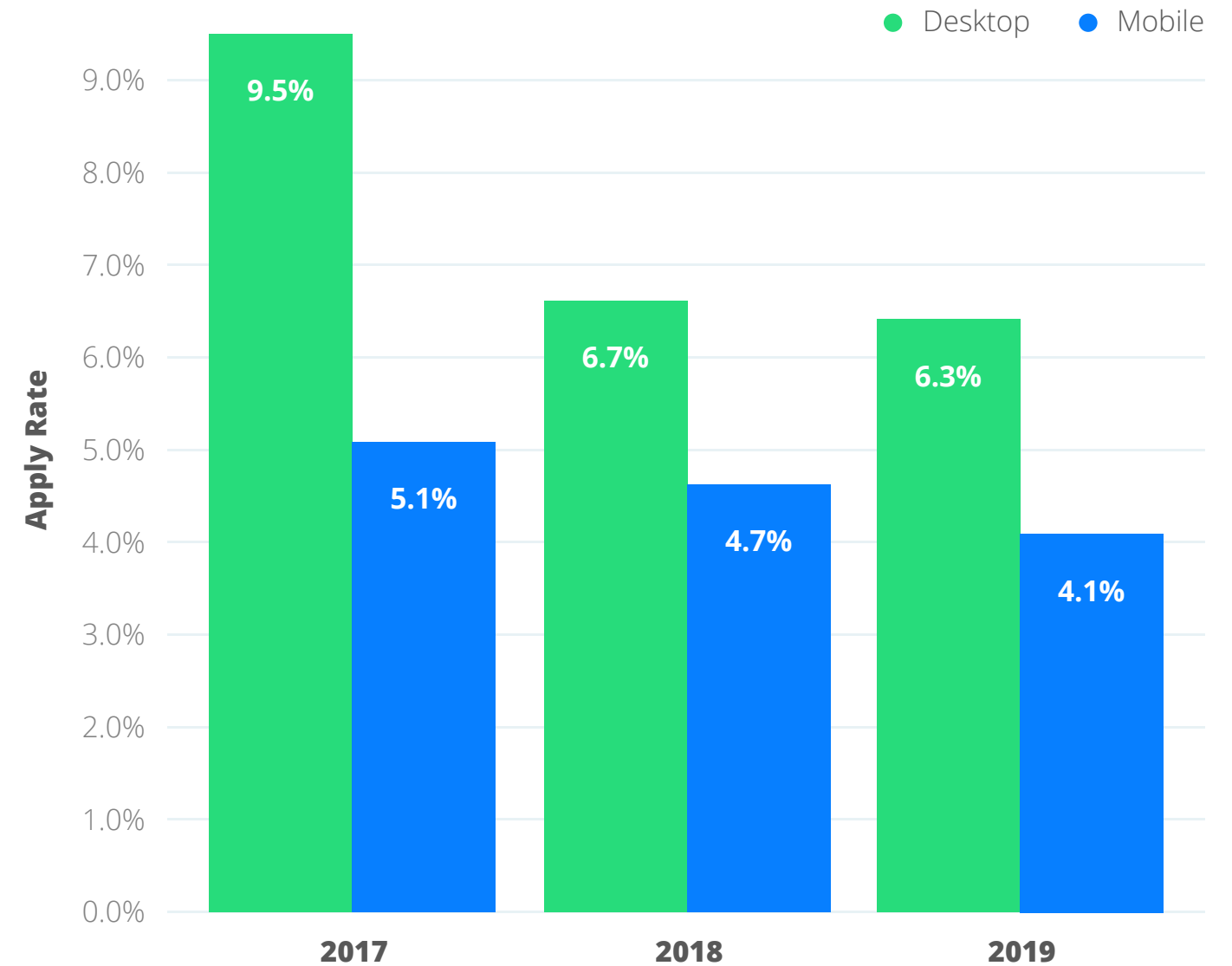
Our take on the data

Similar to the apply rates you see here, we've also seen a continued drop (with very slight fluctuations) in the US unemployment rate, meaning presumably fewer candidates were applying for jobs.

Additionally, while there has been a lot of traction in understanding how job seekers behave and aligning recruitment strategies accordingly, there are still areas of improvement. Specifically: how to improve the application experience to ultimately improve apply rates.

What does this mean for you?

Look for opportunities to improve your apply rates. Apply for your own jobs on desktop and mobile devices, identify or establish benchmarks for that process to understand where and why you experience job seeker drop-off, and make changes!



Industries/Functions

In this section, you will gain insight into how to best reach your job seekers (mobile or desktop device) and how much you should bid to reach them, based on the industry/function that you're hiring in.



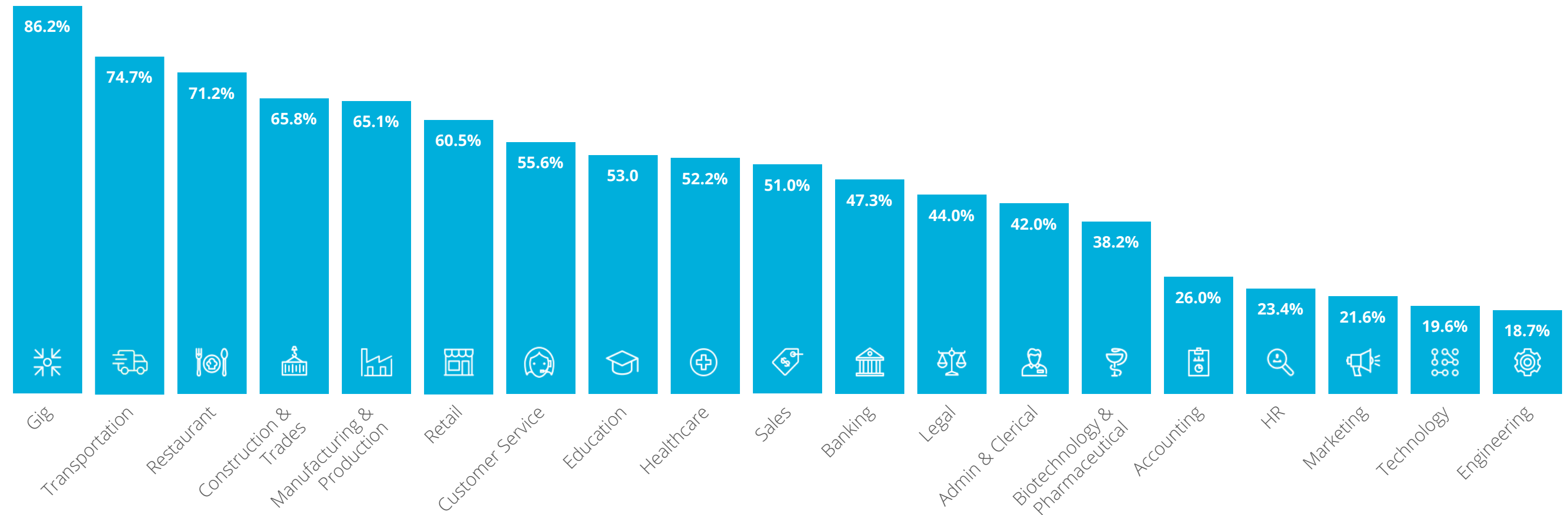


Percentage of Mobile Applies by Industry/Function

Overview

Of all 7 million applies in 2019, we wanted to understand what percentage of those were captured on a mobile device.

Gig (86.2%) and Transportation (74.7%) had the highest percentage of mobile applies, while Engineering had the lowest (13.83%, albeit, that's a 36% increase over last year's applies). Notable shift: Healthcare mobile applies increased from 35% to 52.2% in 2019.





Percentage of Mobile Applies by Industry/Function (continued)

Our take on the data

The percentage of applies that happen on a mobile device could be indicative of a variety of factors including: how mobile-compatible the application process is, where the job seekers commonly live and breathe within each industry/function, and the length or complexity of the actual application. This explains why we see a number of traditional 'desk jobs' at the bottom of the heap - these candidates may simply spend more time on desktop computers and the job apply processes often have lengthier and more cumbersome requirements.

Mobile applies are dominated by the Gig space, which makes sense given that their entire operating and revenue model is driven by the emergence of mobile applications (programs, not candidates!).

What does this mean for you?

The volume of mobile applies is continuing to rise across all industries/functions, however, as you'll see on [page 11](#), apply rates are not. This means it is imperative that you work on improving your apply flow because if you don't, you are losing candidates, and you're wasting spend on clicks that don't convert into applicants. Bottom line: Job seekers are increasingly using mobile devices to find jobs - focus on making it easier for them to apply to those jobs!



Apply Rate by Industry

Overview

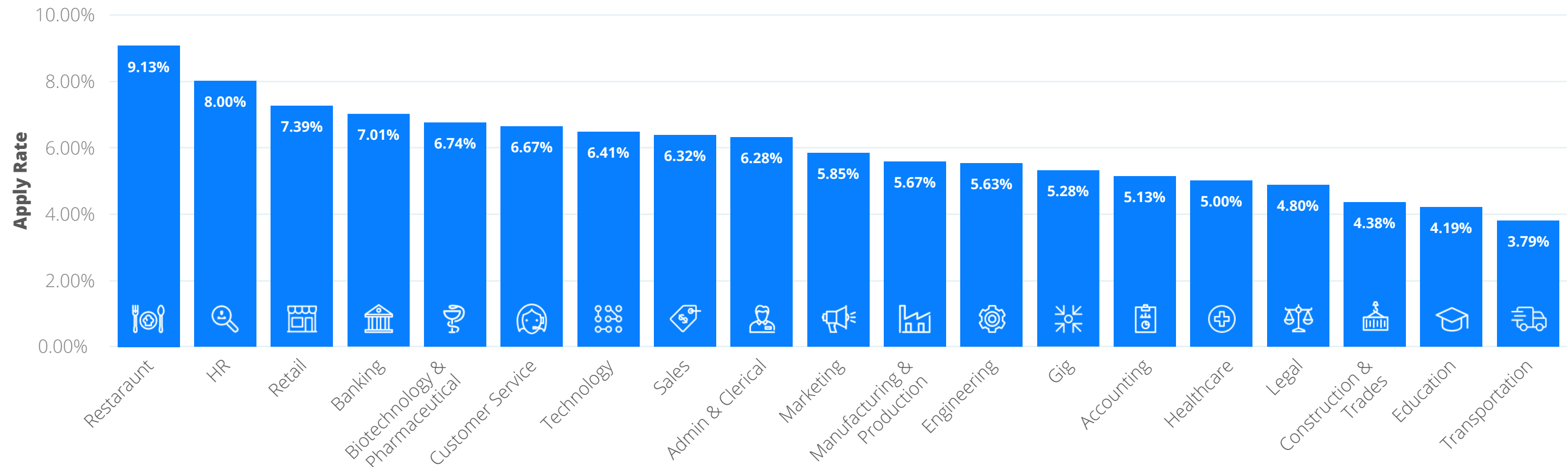
Industries/functions with the highest average apply rates in 2019 were Restaurant (9.13%), HR (8.00%), Retail (7.39%), and Banking (7.01%). Industries/functions with the lowest average apply rates in 2019 were Construction/Trades (4.38%), Education (4.19%), and Transportation (3.79%).

Our take on the data

While Education has moved into a lower apply rate in 2019, both Construction and Transportation are year-over-year stalwarts in being some of the toughest Industries/functions to convert potential candidates into applicants.

What does this mean for you?

Consult average job ad apply rates within your industry/function to understand what conversion rates you might see across certain jobs. Breaking down the steps of how your job seekers move from viewing or clicking on your job ad to when they apply, and identifying the gaps, will allow you to make improvements that can increase your apply rates.





Apply Rate by Industry - Mobile vs. Desktop

Overview

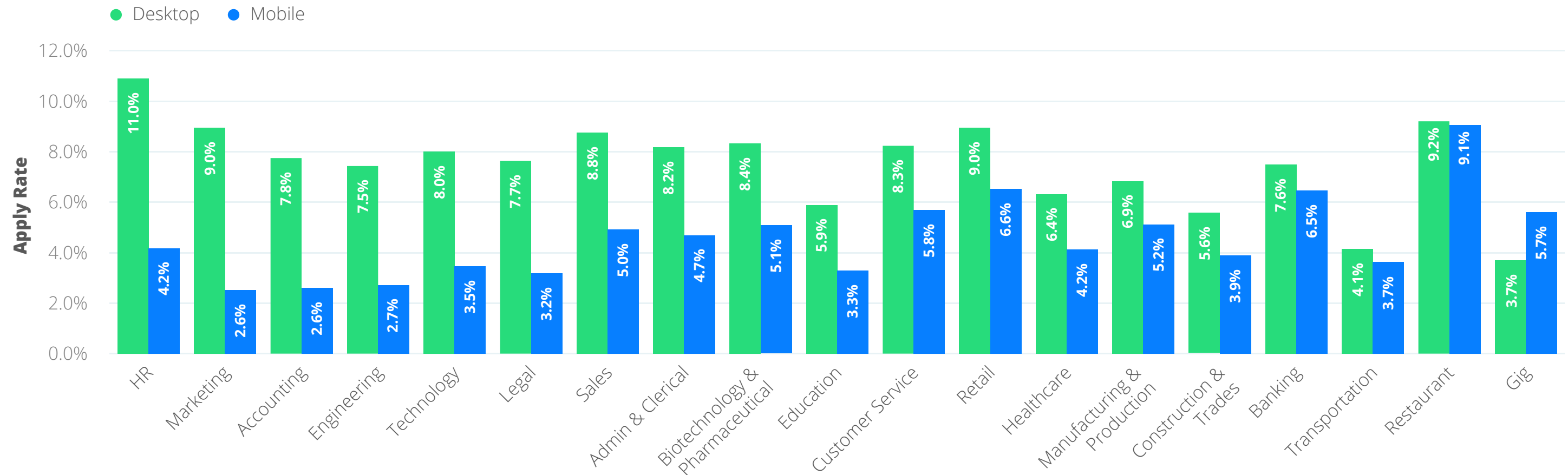
Desktop apply rates are nearly double that of the mobile apply rate in nearly all industries/functions, with the exception of Restaurant (where the rates are nearly identical), and Gig (where, as mentioned, is explained by the nature of how Gig employers operate).

Our take on the data

In industries/functions where the number of applies is high, it becomes increasingly evident where the disconnect and disparities are between how job seekers behave and how optimized an employer's apply process is.

What does this mean for you?

Make improvements to your apply process. Period. If you are hiring in an industry/function where there are a high volume of applies coming from mobile, make sure your mobile apply process is streamlined and job seeker friendly. Every job seeker on mobile (or desktop) that clicks on your job ad but doesn't apply wastes advertising spend.





CPC by Industry/Function

Overview

Industries/functions with the highest average cost-per-click job ad bids in 2019 were Gig (\$1.14), Healthcare (\$0.81), Transportation (\$0.80), and Accounting (\$0.76).

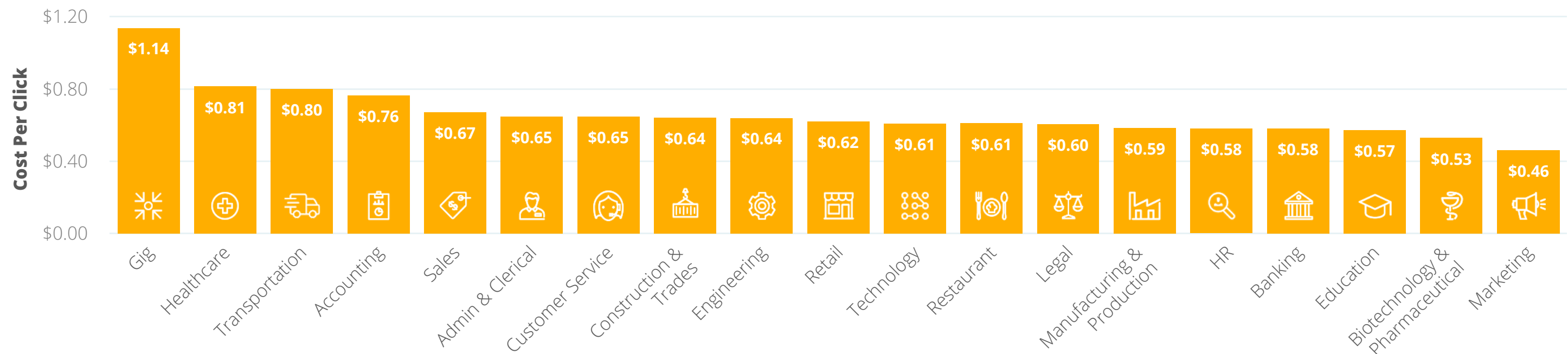
Industries/functions with the lowest cost-per-click bids in 2019 were Construction/Trades (\$0.50), HR (\$0.47), and Biotechnology/Pharmaceutical (\$0.39).

Our take on the data

Higher CPC bids within these industries/functions in 2019 could be attributed to higher demand and stiffer competition to fill these roles in 2019. Oftentimes, as the talent market becomes more competitive, hiring organizations must “bid up” to reach candidates. Healthcare and Transportation are highly competitive arenas in which to hire. The Gig space is bit of an outlier because their revenue is directly tied to having more people in those single-profile roles. They are bidding up for volume and to drive organizational growth.

What does this mean for you?

Average CPC is a great starting point but keep in mind: your brand, apply process, job location and required volume all influence the right CPC for you. In addition, a higher CPC can often lead to a higher conversion rate, and therefore, a lower cost to acquire candidates and hires.





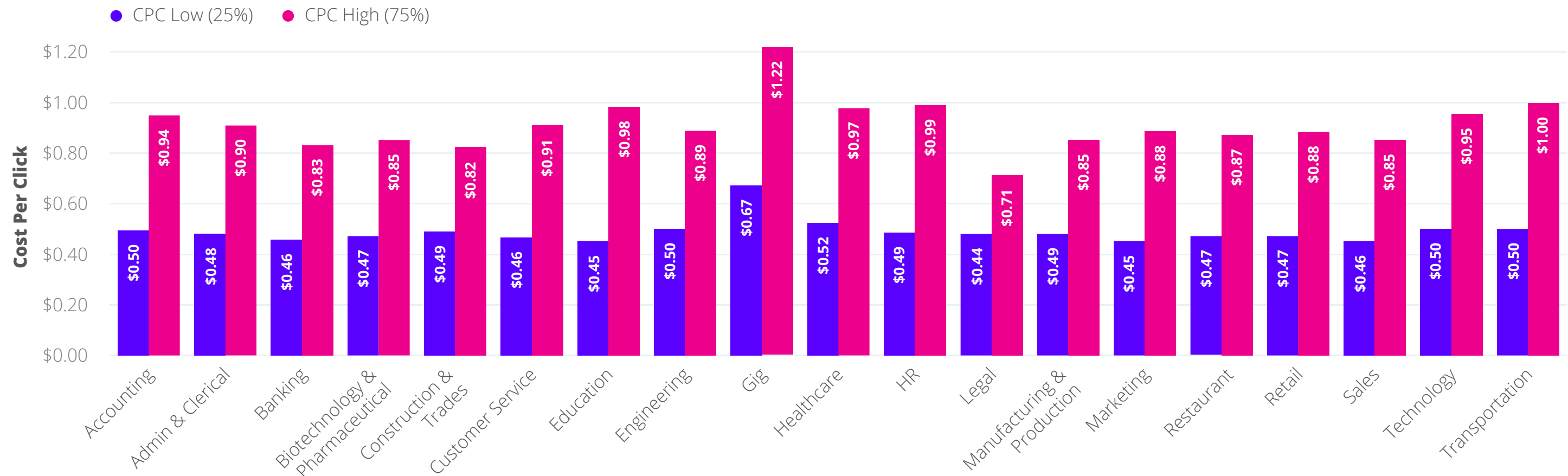
CPC Job Ad Bid Range by Industry/Function

Overview

We looked at industry pricing data at a more granular level to understand median CPC bids, along a range of values to give you a sense of 'high end' and 'low end' for your respective industry/function. Within each industry/function, the low median CPC bid (25%) is shown in the first bar. The second bar shows the high median CPC bid (75%). The majority of CPC bids in 2019 were bought within the 25% and 75% range. For example, within Retail, most CPC job ad bids fell between \$0.47 and \$0.88 in 2019.

What does this mean for you?

Ensure that your CPC bids fall within the median range in the industries/functions you're hiring within, bearing in mind that when stacked against a more competitive hiring market (think Boston vs. Boise), you may have to bid higher than the 75% in order to remain competitive in that market.





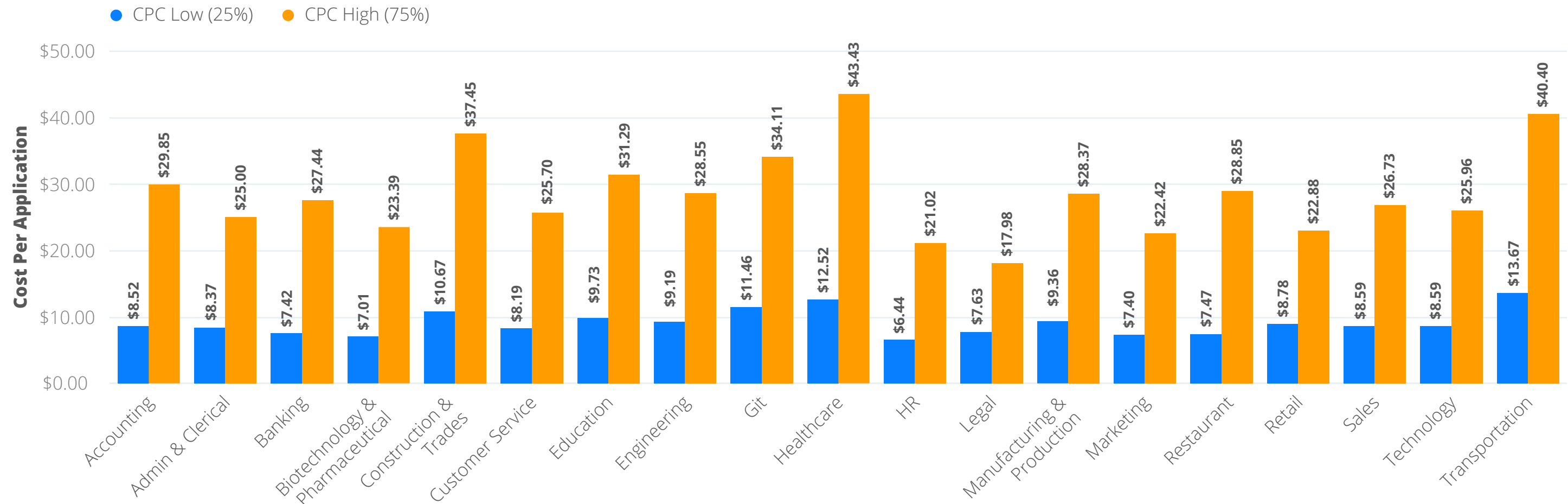
CPA Job Ad Bid Range by Industry/Function

Overview

We analyzed the CPA pricing range with the same methodology as the CPC bid range. Within each industry/function, the low median CPA price (25%) is shown in the first bar. The second bar shows the high median CPA price (75%). The majority of CPA prices in 2019 were bought within the 25% and 75% range. For example, within Transportation, most CPA prices were between \$13.67 and \$40.40 in 2019.

What does this mean for you?

Make sure that your CPA prices fall within the median range for your industry/function, while bearing in mind that where you are hiring, your brand reputation, and your apply process can also impact the price.



Markets

In this section, you will learn more about the markets in which you are looking to hire including the average apply rate and the average cost of a click on one of your job ads.

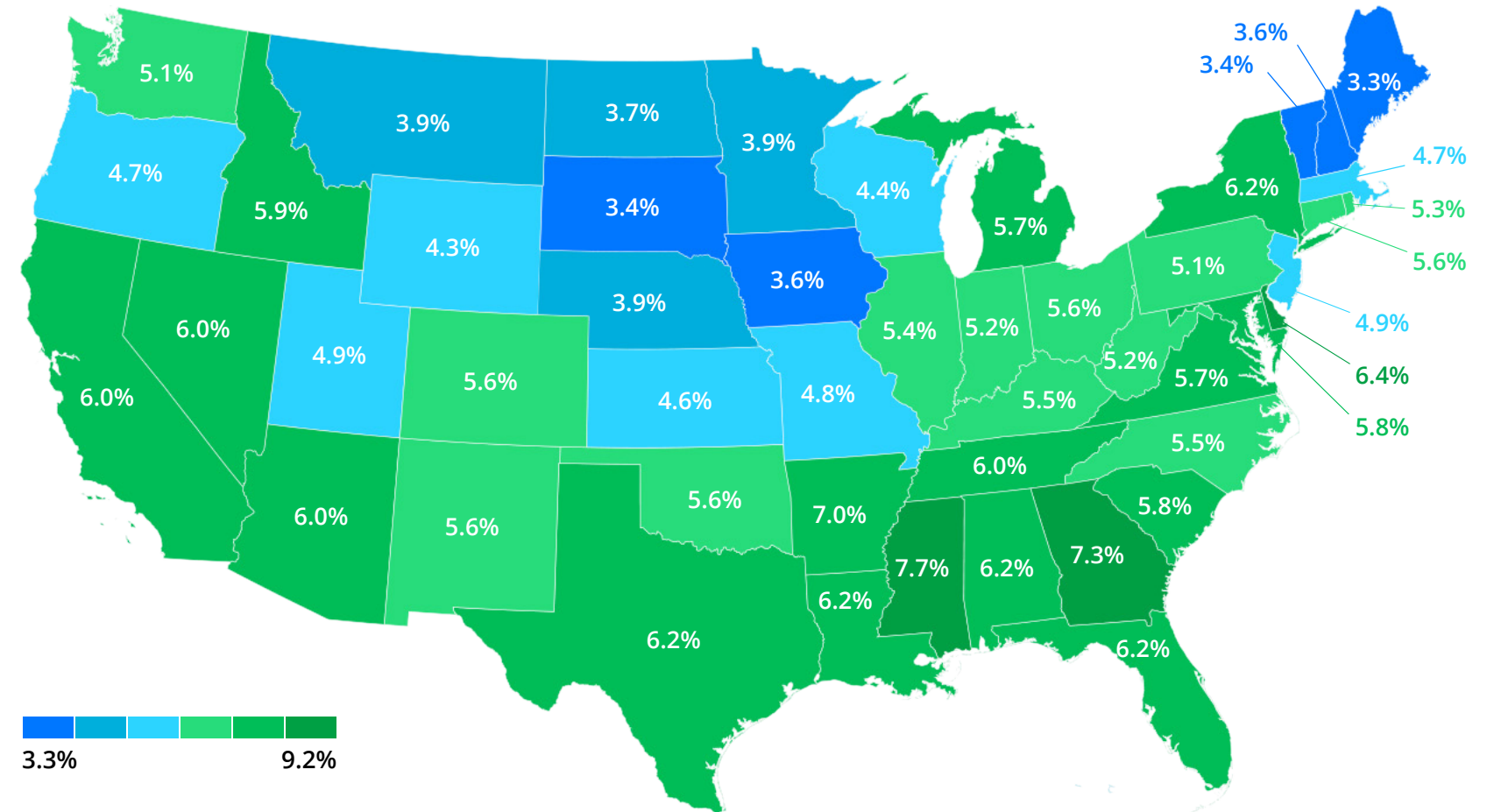




Apply Rate by State

Overview

• AK 4.09%	• ID 5.89%	• MT 3.93%	• RI 5.37%
• AL 6.20%	• IL 5.43%	• NC 5.50%	• SC 5.83%
• AR 7.04%	• IN 5.19%	• ND 3.65%	• SD 3.43%
• AZ 5.96%	• KS 4.55%	• NE 3.90%	• TN 5.97%
• CA 6.04%	• KY 5.46%	• NH 3.63%	• TX 6.19%
• CO 5.57%	• LA 6.17%	• NJ 4.94%	• UT 4.85%
• CT 5.63%	• MA 4.75%	• NM 5.55%	• VA 5.47%
• DC 9.22%	• MD 5.86%	• NV 6.01%	• VT 3.40%
• DE 6.46%	• ME 3.26%	• NY 6.16%	• WA 5.09%
• FL 6.22%	• MI 5.71%	• OH 5.64%	• WI 4.41%
• GA 7.29%	• MN 3.87%	• OK 5.62%	• WV 5.21%
• HI 3.50%	• MO 4.77%	• OR 4.71%	• WY 4.29%
• IA 3.57%	• MS 7.72%	• PA 5.05%	



What does this mean for you?

As competition for talent varies by market, understand how this will impact your recruiting strategy. States with lower apply rates indicate a more competitive market. Adjust and bid up to gain access to the talent that your organization needs.

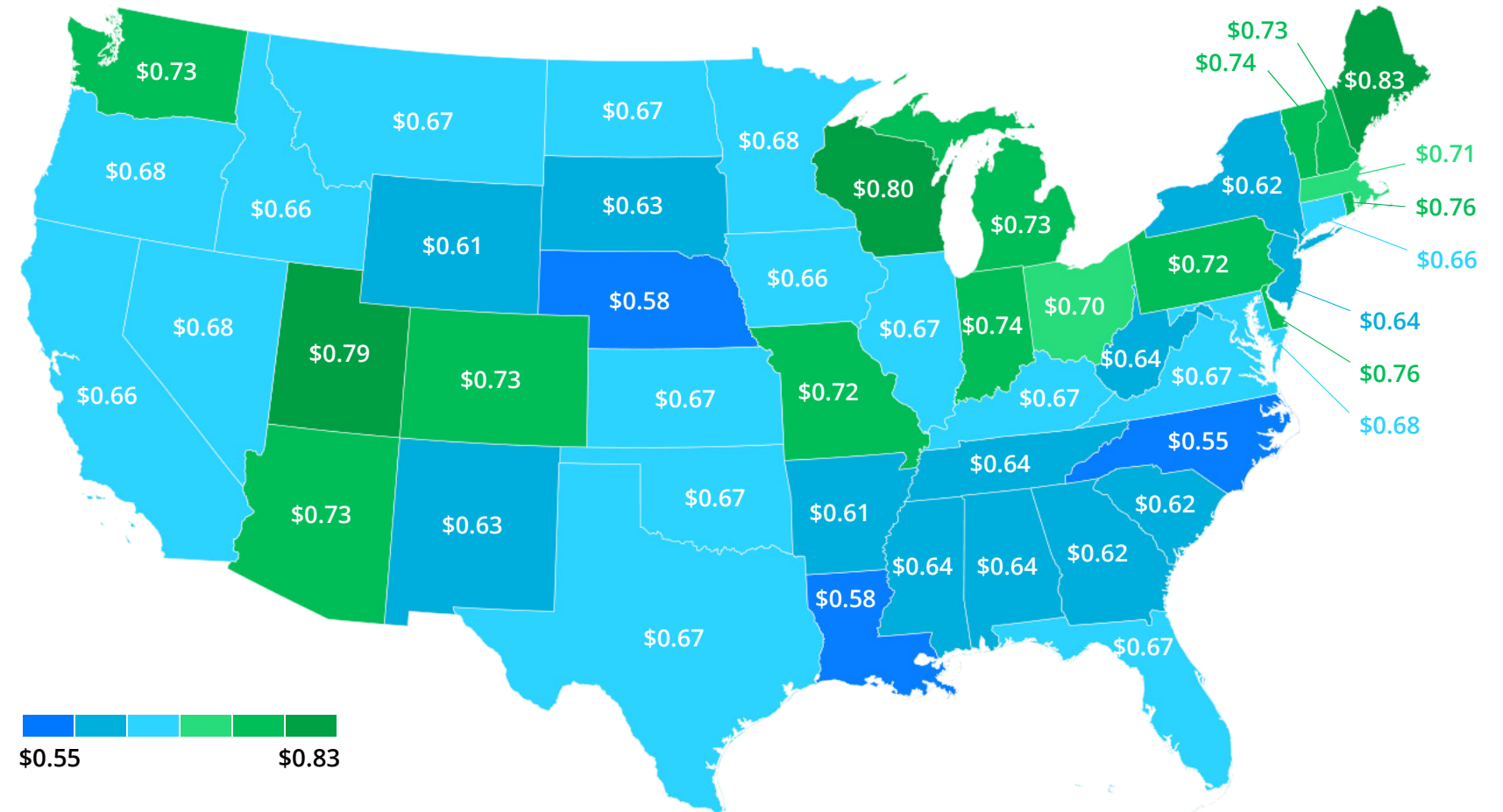
Note: When analyzing the average apply rates across U.S. states in 2019, all data shown corresponds with the exact location listed on each individual job. For example, average apply rates for states are based on language in individual jobs, such as "hiring in Boston."



CPC by State

Overview

• AK \$0.67	• ID \$0.66	• MT \$0.67	• RI \$0.76
• AL \$0.64	• IL \$0.67	• NC \$0.55	• SC \$0.62
• AR \$0.61	• IN \$0.74	• ND \$0.67	• SD \$0.63
• AZ \$0.73	• KS \$0.67	• NE \$0.58	• TN \$0.64
• CA \$0.66	• KY \$0.67	• NH \$0.73	• TX \$0.67
• CO \$0.73	• LA \$0.58	• NJ \$0.64	• UT \$0.79
• CT \$0.66	• MA \$0.71	• NM \$0.63	• VA \$0.67
• DC \$0.76	• MD \$0.68	• NV \$0.68	• VT \$0.74
• DE \$0.76	• ME \$0.83	• NY \$0.62	• WA \$0.73
• FL \$0.67	• MI \$0.73	• OH \$0.70	• WI \$0.80
• GA \$0.62	• MN \$0.68	• OK \$0.67	• WV \$0.64
• HI \$0.63	• MO \$0.72	• OR \$0.68	• WY \$0.61
• IA \$0.66	• MS \$0.64	• PA \$0.72	



What does this mean for you?

Bid based on the region where you're hiring. Consult average CPC bids by state to get a benchmark of the appropriate price you should be bidding to reach candidates.

Note: We looked at the average cost-per-click job ad bid by state analysis the same way as when looking at apply rates. In 2019, all data shown corresponds with the exact location listed on each individual job. For example, average CPC's for state are based on language in individual jobs, such as "hiring in Boston."

Job Ad Content

In this section, you will learn how to attract more job seekers to apply for your jobs by aligning your job titles with their behavior and expectations.

The data in this section is based on an analysis of 16 million job requisitions and 600,000 distinct job titles.





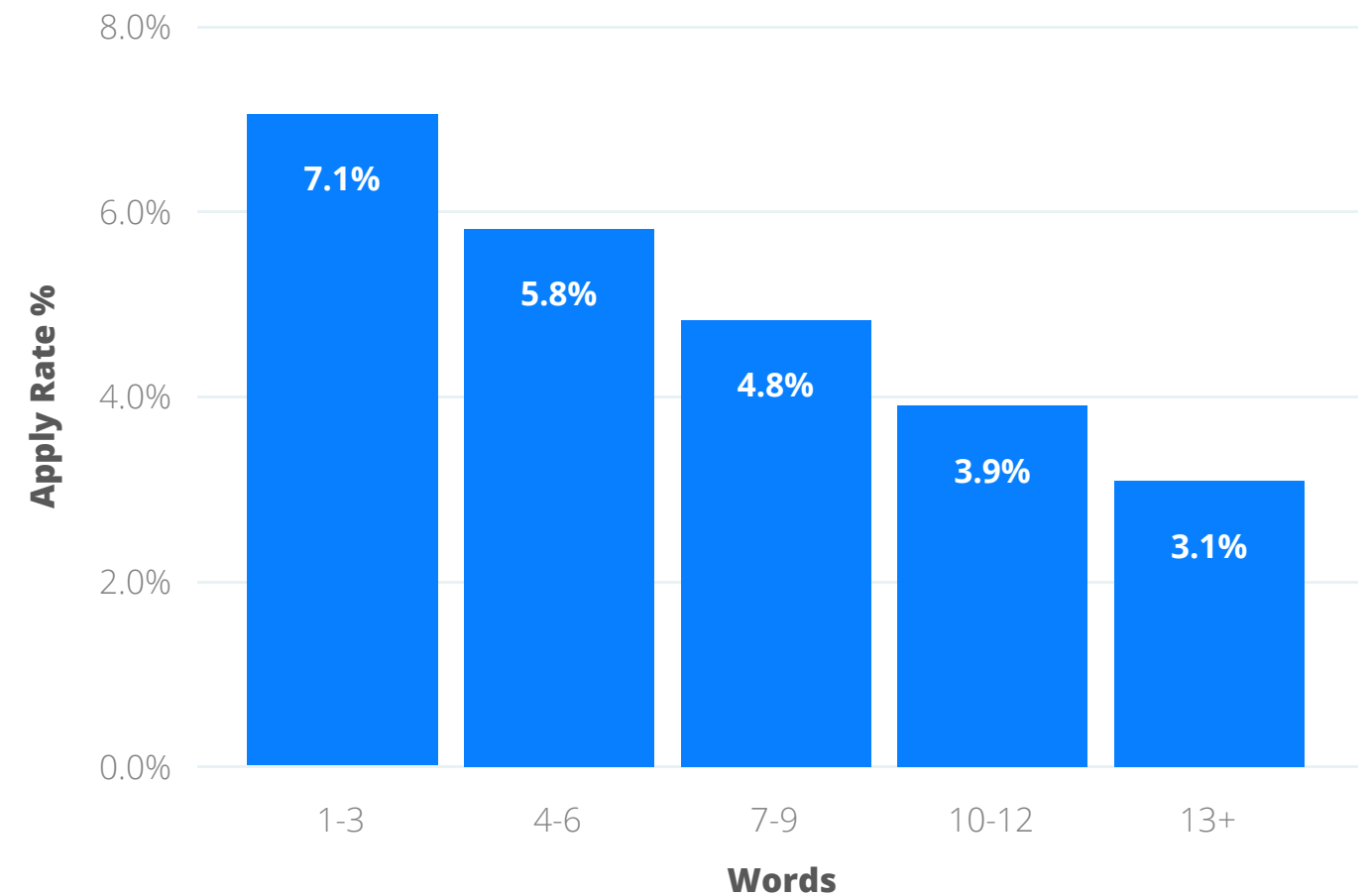
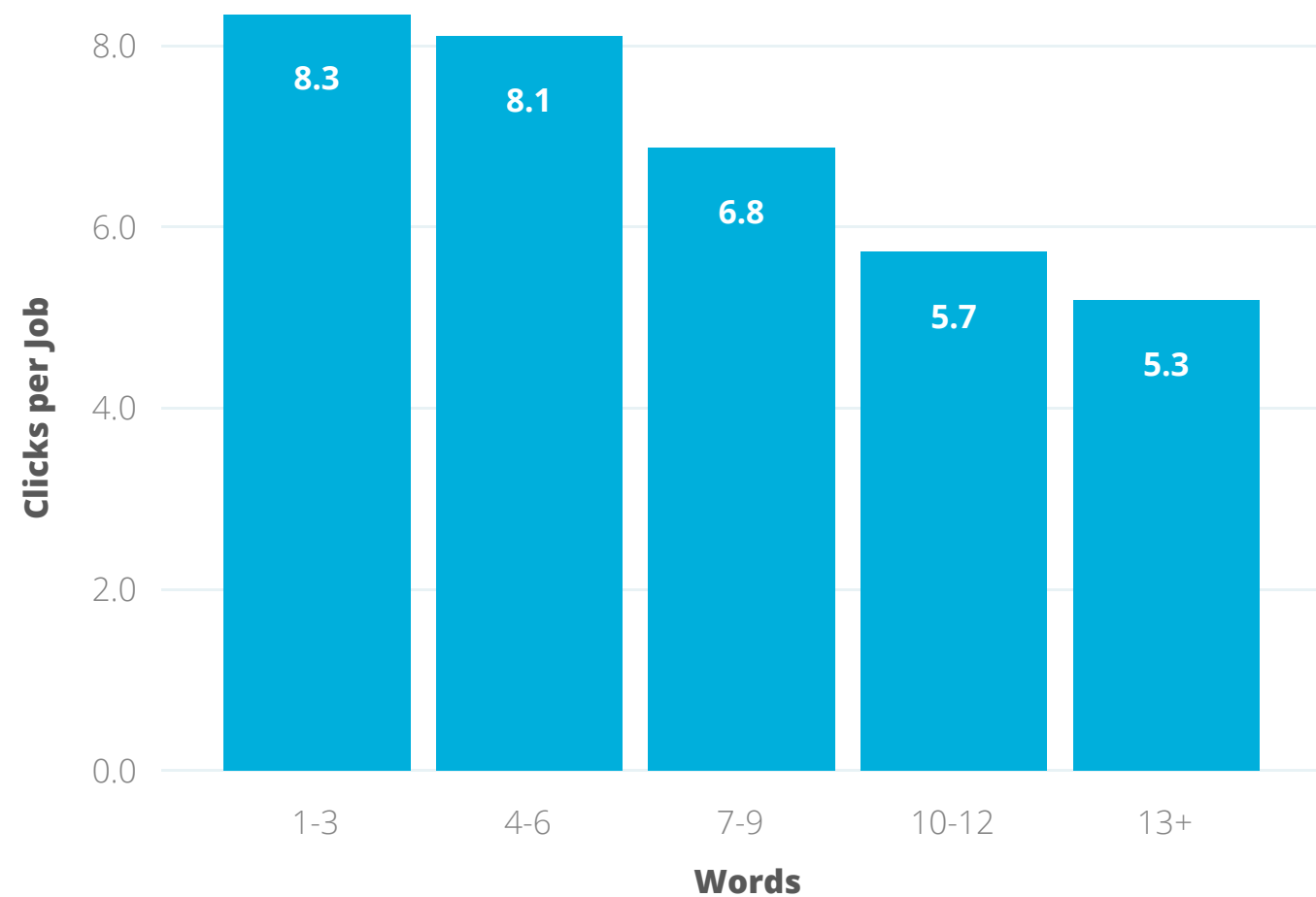
Clicks & Apply Rate by Job Title Length

Overview

In 2019, job ads with titles between one and three words had the highest average volume of clicks (8.3) and highest apply rate at 7.1%. There was a steady decline in both metrics as job titles became longer. Notable mention: Job titles with just one word had an apply rate of 9.9%!

What does this mean for you?

While we realize that one-word titles won't work for every role, function, or industry, the overall message is evident: Keep titles simple, clear, and free of jargon. This trend has been consistent year over year - jobs with shorter titles perform best.



Timing

In this section, you will learn the best time of week and month to reach job seekers.





Percentage of Applies by Day of the Week

Overview

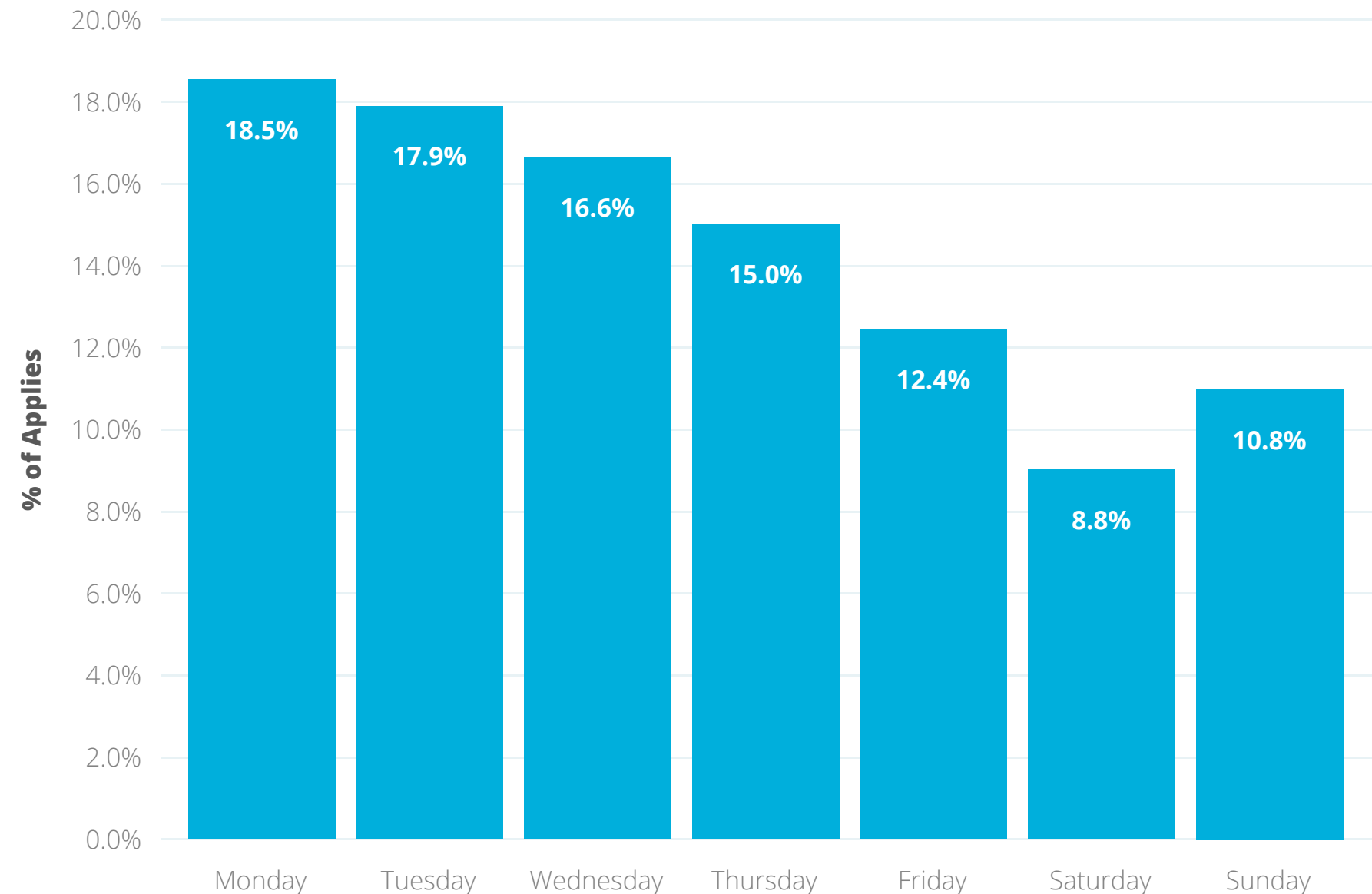
Job seeker performance data from 2019 revealed that Monday is when you will see the highest percentage of applies. There is steady drop-off throughout the rest of the week, with the low being on Saturday.

Our take on the data

If you're an active job seeker, then you treat looking for jobs like a job. With unemployment being so low, this suggests that active candidates (in addition to passive candidates) are applying to jobs while at work.

What does this mean for you?

Make sure your jobs are posted on Mondays. If using a programmatic partner, ensure you're bidding down or setting your bids lower on days of the week when your jobs are likely to get less visibility. This will ensure you're not wasting budget on days of the week with low candidate activity.





Percentage of Mobile Applies by Day of the Week

Overview

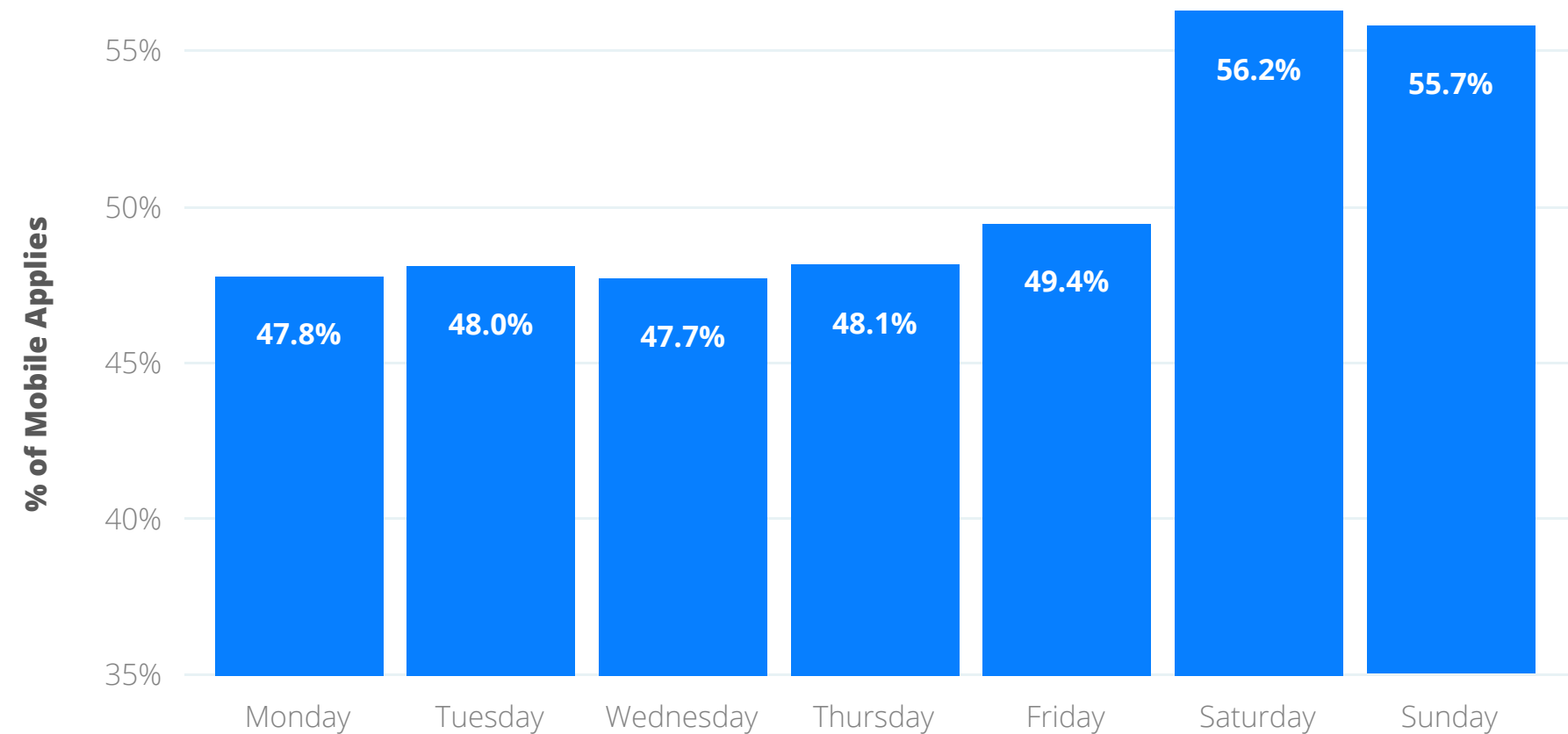
Mobile apply volume is highest on the weekend - Saturday (56.2%) and Sunday (55.7%).

Our take on the data

It seems that mobile activity is higher on weekends because that is when job seekers are more likely to be on the go, whereas during the week they are more likely to be on a desktop. This could also be an indication of passive job seekers being more active at this time too, since they are not 'on the job' and are browsing for roles on personal devices.

What does this mean for you?

At a high level - know your audience! If you are hiring for an industry or function that you know are more active on mobile (see [page 9](#) and [12](#)), then sponsor your jobs for weekends - the data suggests your ads will perform well. One note of caution, however: ensure your apply process is optimized for mobile (browser agnostic, short and barrier-free, with simple resume upload). If not, then you may see less desirable results.



Note: The graph above demonstrates for each day of the week, of all the applies that occur on that day, what percentage of those are completed on a mobile device.



Apply Rate by Day of the Week

Overview

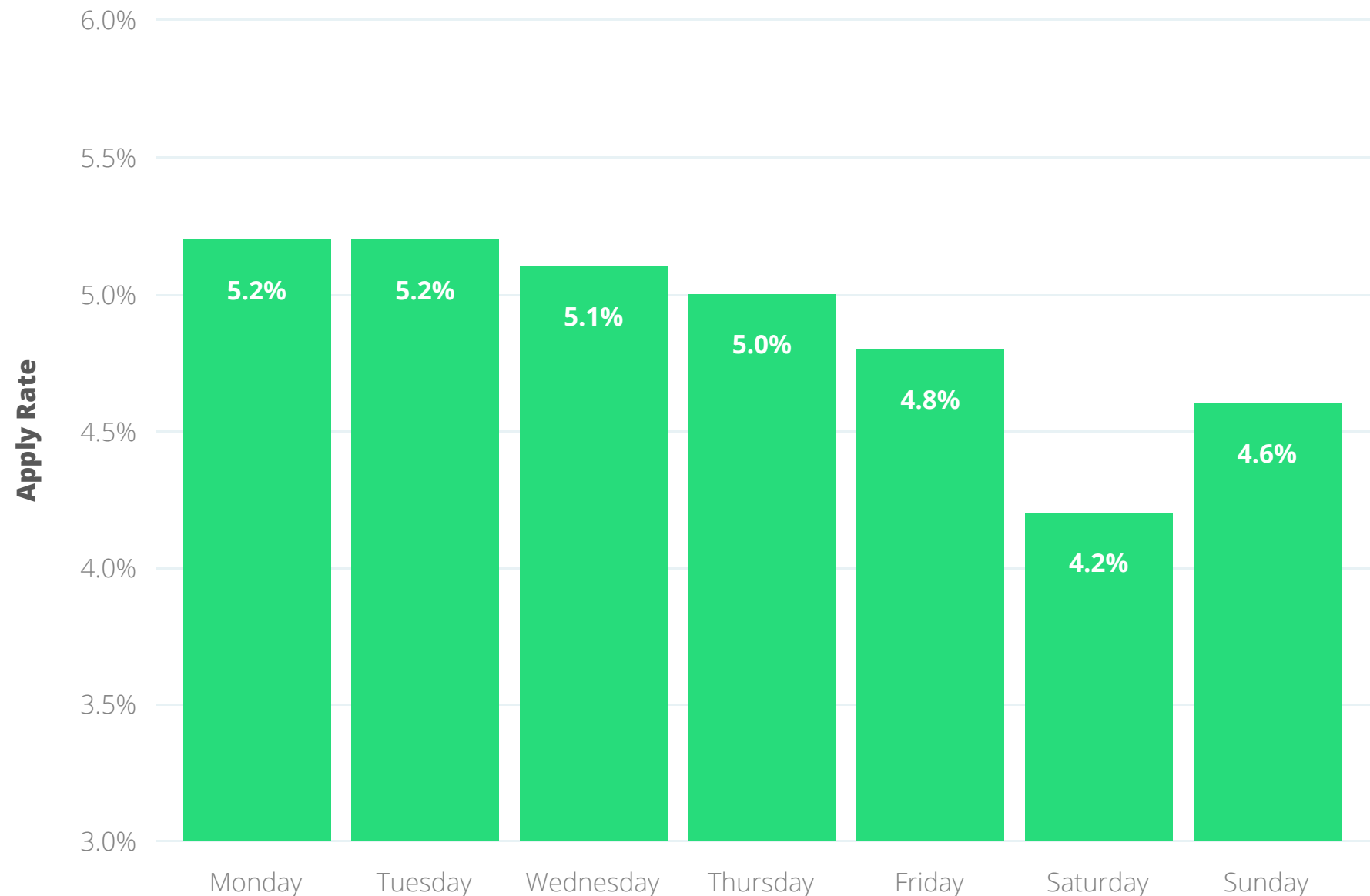
Similar to last year, job seeker performance data from 2019 revealed that Monday and Tuesday are when you will see the highest rate of applies on your job ads. There is steady drop-off throughout the rest of the week, with the low being on Saturday.

Our take on the data

Following on the trend we saw in apply traffic on [page 22](#), this trend suggests that more people apply to jobs during the week. During the day, they're applying on a desktop computers, and on evenings and weekends, they're applying on mobile devices (as indicated by mobile apply traffic on the [previous page](#)).

What does this mean for you?

Make sure your jobs are posted on Mondays. If using a programmatic partner, ensure you're bidding down or setting your bids lower on days of the week when your jobs are likely to get less visibility. This will ensure you're not wasting budget on days of the week with low candidate activity.





Impact of Day of the Month

Overview

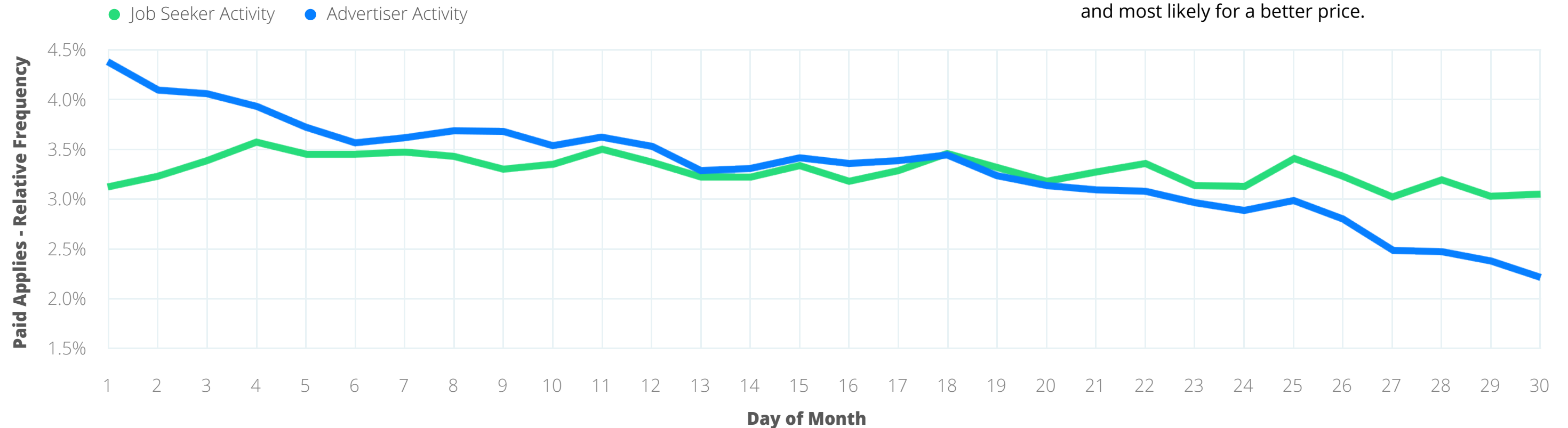
The pacing of recruitment advertising activity steadily declines as the month passes, while job seeker activity remains relatively consistent throughout the whole month.

Our take on the data

Many recruitment advertisers manage not only annual budgets but monthly budgets and because they typically 'run out' at the end of the previous month, budgets are ready to be spent again at the beginning of a new month. As for job seekers, people are always looking for and applying to jobs regardless of the time of month.

What does this mean for you?

If you have the flexibility, and you have a clear picture of how candidates convert through your hiring funnel (for example, how many applications you need to make a hire), you may want to try to better pace your budget more evenly throughout the month. You'll have a better chance of reaching job seekers later in the month (less competition and more job seekers), and most likely for a better price.





About Appcast

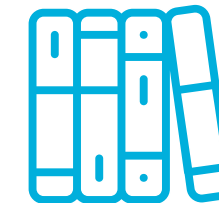
Appcast is on a mission to revolutionize recruitment advertising. As a team of recruiting industry veterans, technologists, & data scientists, we believe that data and software can help employers, job sites, recruitment firms, and agencies alike dramatically improve recruitment outcomes, performance, and ROI. To learn more about Appcast's solutions and sign up for a demo, visit: appcast.io.



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