



Five Top Tips for Using Job Boards Effectively

With competition so fierce on job boards, it's essential candidates hit all the right notes. Here are some tips for improving your success rate.

In theory, nothing could be simpler than applying for a vacancy via a job board. You can browse thousands of great opportunities from the comfort of your home. When you spot a good match, it's just a case of sending off your CV.

But with competition so fierce, employers are often swamped by [CVs](#) and have little time to read each one in detail. So candidates need to make sure they're doing everything possible to ensure theirs makes the cut. Here are some tips for improving your success rate:

Understand the process

Whether you're uploading your CV onto a database so it can be found by recruiters and employers, or applying for a specific vacancy, expect your CV to be "read" by software for relevancy.

For this reason, your CV will need to pass the first hurdle of "suitability" – many fail to make the first cut because they're not relevant or targeted enough to the role. The job description is a good place to find relevant keywords, specific skills, qualifications or areas of expertise. [Gary Franklin](#), resourcing process and technology specialist and co-founder of [The FIRM](#), advises against just dumping a long list of keywords at the start of your CV to improve your relevancy match, however. Instead, a well-written executive summary of around 150-200 words can help a job board categorize you and gives recruiters a good picture of your expertise and talents.

Show you've made an effort

Prove to a recruiter that you've read the job description and that your CV reflects the role requirements. Focus on the "so what?" of what you've done – what value is it to a potential employer? Along with the scope of your role, targets and responsibilities, highlight your achievements and how you've used your skills. Failing to do this can make a recruiter wonder if you're really bothered about the opportunity, Franklin says. Key details should be prominent and on the first page of your CV.

A good layout also shows you've made an effort. Keep your font consistent throughout your CV – inconsistencies can look like you've copied and pasted from elsewhere. Choose a common font – Franklin recommends Verdana, Calibri and Tahoma as safe choices – at a legible size.

Get in quick

Expect fierce competition so don't delay too long before you apply. [Research varies, but around 250 CVs are received for each job vacancy](#) with responses arriving quickly after the posting. Don't sacrifice quality for speed though. Grammar and spelling mistakes are still one of the



biggest reasons CVs are rejected. Speed up your response rate by signing up for alerts which tell you when relevant jobs are advertised.

Respect the limitations

While a beautifully-designed CV is great for face-to-face meetings, go for plain formatting when you're submitting your CV to an online database or job board, so that it can be parsed into the system. Don't include graphics, tables or images. Upload as a word document or PDF.

Don't shoot yourself in the foot

Follow the application instructions to avoid falling at the first hurdle. Some job boards also give you advice on CV layout and submission, helping you present information in the optimum way for that job board, employer or recruiter.

Avoid putting your home address on your CV. This is not just to help protect you against identity theft, but also to make sure you aren't inadvertently ruling yourself out for a job because you live outside a particular radius. An email address and mobile number is sufficient contact information.

Make sure you're familiar with the privacy settings of the job board and that you can choose how much information to make visible.

As well as the big generalist boards, also search on smaller job boards that specialize in your sector or geographical area.

By Clare Whitmell from Guardian Careers