

Using Job Boards

The 21st century version of circling job adverts in newspapers, job boards can be an excellent job hunting tool. They are everywhere, from huge national job boards to niche job boards run by industry publications. Job boards can help you reach thousands of employers and recruiters.

You can broadly split job boards into two types: some are vacancy boards, like [ours](#), giving you access to a range of job opportunities, while others might require you to submit your CV to a database which will be used by recruiters to search for candidates, as well as hosting vacancies.

TOP TIPS FOR USING JOB BOARDS...

Job boards look deceptively easy to use. You can snuggle up in bed, laptop at hand and browse through a seemingly bountiful number of jobs. It requires minimum effort and it certainly feels like you're being proactive.

But here's the thing: just having a quick look or blindly submitting your CV to as many job boards as possible isn't really going to help you much. Job boards are competitive places. Indeed, employers posting on job boards might receive hundreds of applications, and recruiters will have thousands of CVs to sift through. So how can you make the most out of a job board?

OPTIMISE YOUR CV...

Some job boards require you to submit a [CV](#); others might also require you to [write a covering letter](#). To be perfectly honest, not all recruiters will read your covering letter, so you need to make sure you've really primed your CV. For starters, although you might not usually do this, you might want to include your career objectives or interests in a small personal statement at the top of your CV. It only needs to be a couple of lines, but it should clearly state the areas of work and types of jobs you're interested in.

You should also 'optimise' your CV for keyword searches. Yes, that's right, a little bit of search engine optimisation (SEO) won't go amiss when you submit your CV online. Why? Well, because recruiters using job boards will use certain terms and keywords in their search to dredge up a list of CVs from the database. You want to make sure, especially for the industries and job roles you're interested in, that your CV pops up in their search. For more information about this and how to optimise your CV, take a look at our [CV keywords](#) article.

Another trick is to regularly update your [CV](#) on job boards. Most recruiters searching job boards for candidates will restrict their search to the latest CVs that were uploaded on the site, so make sure your CV is amongst them.

SEARCHING FOR JOBS USING JOB BOARDS...

Of course, it's not just about someone finding your CV, but seeking out the job opportunities that appeal to you. Admittedly, you probably aren't going to find your perfect job the first time you visit a job board. However, with a few tricks up your sleeve, you can narrow down the deluge of jobs and find ones that really interest you.

First of all, choose a range of job boards to search through. By all means, sign up to the big job boards, but also have a look at some more niche job boards that focus on one area, such as a particular industry that you're interested in (e.g. advertising or publishing), or on job boards which are specifically designed for students and graduates, like [our job board](#) (cough cough). To find niche job boards in your area of interest, it's best to look at institutions, societies, associations and industry publications. Most will have a job board of sorts. Compile a spreadsheet of links to online job sources and blitz through them on a regular basis.

Big job boards can seem like vast, unfathomable places. And it seems equally hard to pick out the jobs you're actually interested in from all of the strange specimens you find on there. So how can you find jobs that interest you? First of all, restrict your search geographically; there's no point looking at job opportunities in Scotland if you're pretty sure you want to stay in Cornwall.

Secondly, don't just type in job titles (such as sales assistant), try skills or keywords too. That way you'll find a broader range of opportunities, or you might even find a role that you haven't thought of before, which suits your skills to a T.

Finally, read beyond the job title, look at the company and find out what the job actually involves before you dismiss it. Yes, the job title might sound dull, but reading beyond the title might unearth a potentially interesting job. All in all, you have to be a bit flexible when using job boards.

APPLYING THROUGH JOB BOARDS...

When confronted with a deluge of jobs, it's pretty tempting to apply to everything. Don't fall into this trap: you want to cherry pick the roles that suit your interests, qualifications and experience. That way you can fire off a perfectly honed, enthusiastic application. If you spend the same time applying to fewer jobs that you're genuinely interested in, rather than sending off hundreds of generic applications, you're far more likely to get interviews.

Believe us, sending off slapdash [job applications](#) is a waste of your time and a waste of the employer's time. The companies on our [job board](#) want students and graduates who are genuinely passionate about working for their company and are truly excited about the job being advertised.

When filling out an application for a job, always make sure you read the small print. For some reason, online applications can make the best of us trip up. Make sure you answer all the questions and follow all the instructions. Copy and pasting from previous applications is a no-no.

Take a look at our [online job applications](#) article for more tips, and always get someone else to proofread your application. Companies using job boards will receive hundreds of badly thought-out applications, so spending a little time and attention on your application can really make you [stand out from the crowd](#).

USING JOB BOARDS AS A RESEARCH TOOL...



There is another use for job boards. They can be excellent resources for finding out which companies are hiring, what kind of jobs are out there, and what industries have a growing amount of job opportunities.

You can then gather all this information to strategize your job hunt, i.e. trying to build up a network in the industry, using social media, continuing research, looking for internships or other ways to get into these companies without going through the job board.

THE PITFALLS OF JOB BOARDS...

Don't just rely on job boards in your job hunt; you should be devoting equal, if not more, time to [networking](#), using [social media](#), checking out company websites and [alternative job hunting methods](#). Job boards are incredibly competitive places; you need to be aware that you might be up against hundreds of applicants for one particular role.

Be wary of some job boards. There are quite a few job boards out there where the jobs are outdated or simply aren't real.

Job boards can also be hunting grounds for aggressive [recruitment agencies](#). Believe us, we don't have any beef with recruitment agencies. Some are fine institutions and can be a godsend for those looking for work. A good recruitment agent will prep you for interviews, help you with your CV, and "sell" your application to employers on your behalf.

Unfortunately though, like in any industry, there are some bad apples in the mix. Sometimes recruitment agencies post fake jobs in order to collect CVs to add to their database. You might find yourself getting harangued for roles and jobs that you simply aren't interested in, or some may simply get in touch with you in order to wheedle out promising contacts.

All in all, you should be aware that posting your CV online or using job boards will have both its benefits and disadvantages. Job boards aren't the magical solution to unemployment, but they are a useful tool in your job hunt.

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