



Spring 2009 Newsletter

Recruiting for hard to fill posts

All colleges have posts that they dread filling. Posts that are continually re-advertised in a desperate attempt to attract suitable candidates. (Whilst the type of roles vary by college, Construction and Health and Social care are probably the two most often quoted).

Unfortunately this story of frustration is one that we hear time and time again. What to do next? Chances are that if it didn't work the first time, it's unlikely to work a second time.

Rather than resorting to expensive recruitment agencies (again with no guarantees of success) there are a number of highly effective things you can do utilising the internet to improve your chances of filling these types of posts.

Here are our top three suggestions:

#1: CV database searches: This is the most effective method for finding rare candidates. Most online job boards have them (at R21 we have access to over 6.5 million CVs). Once you have arranged access, you need to search for candidates who could be suitable and create a short list. Those short listed should then be approached with details of the job and invited to apply.

This is can be especially effective for:

- Vocational jobs, where you are prepared to support the applicants in gaining their teaching qualifications, perhaps where they have training or assessing experience within the right industry but have yet to do any formal teaching.
- Finding candidates nationally who are prepared to relocate.

#2: Advertise on niche job boards: If you are looking for someone with a Health and Social care background, advertise on social care job boards. There are over 700 job boards available in the UK, with specialist niche sites available for nearly every type of role – use them.

#3: Spread your net across multiple job boards: Advertising on just one or two websites is not the most effective way of recruiting online – even the best sites will only generate a small percentage of the total possible applicants (up to about 14%). Each job board will also perform differently depending on the type of job, location, etc. We would recommend using a minimum of eight boards, with additional specialist, education and location sites used as well. That way you ensure the maximum reach for your advert.

By following these three simple tips then you should significantly increase your chances of filling those difficult roles. Alternatively we can help, by doing it for you.

Case Study: Filton College, Bristol - Public Services Lecturer campaign

In December, Filton college approached R21Media to use their internet advertising service to fill a part time Public Services lecturing role. Knowing this was going to be quite a challenging appointment, the college were prepared to accept applications from candidates who were not as yet qualified, though it was essential that they had had recent experience from within the Armed Forces.

After the advert copy had been written and approved, it was then posted across our network of 400 job boards, appearing on approximately forty different sites. In addition to the usual generalist, education and location specific job boards, we also found a number of sites that specialised in finding ex military personnel.

Once the advert was live (which all happened within 24 hours of the brief being taken), we then embarked on a detailed CV search. We were looking for locally based candidates who had military experience along with some training/teaching experience. Those who matched the spec were then approached about the vacancy and invited to apply.

The campaign ran for three weeks and an analysis of the applications showed that 70% came from just 4 sources: A generalist job board, a specialist ex military board, CV searches and an education job board.

In terms of quality, the military job board and the CV searches were the best performers. (Continues over)





By the end of the campaign we had received over 30 applications, of which 60% were of interview quality. All applications were sent over to the college who then took over the process, arranging interviews etc. The final result was that two candidates have recently been appointed, a highly cost effective campaign for just £795.

Helen (HR Officer) commented: *“R21 Media has always given a professional, responsive, timely and effective service. By giving this service it has saved time on our recruitment in the skill shortage areas. I would not hesitate in recommending R21 Media to work in partnership with your recruitment process.”*

NOT ALL JOB BOARDS ARE CREATED EQUAL

There are currently over 700 job boards in the UK, from the big generalist sites to extremely niche sites. Each has a confusing set of statistics that are designed to show them in the best possible light, but which of them are actually the most effective?

Lots of things can affect application response rates, including:

- Visitor numbers (job seekers specifically)
- Number (and type) of other jobs on the site (too high and it dilutes the response, too low and it puts off job seekers)
- Site design for ease of application
- Jobs by email/CV services
- Type and level of marketing and targeting carried out by the site.

However the only thing that matters is the actual applications received and the quality of those applications.

By analysing the actual applications received from vacancies from each site we can build a good picture of how effective each of the different boards are.

The first thing that is apparent is that it is a very fragmented market, with no single job board dominating – in fact the best board, which was a generalist board, only produced 14% of the applicants, and several boards produced very similar response levels.

On average, to achieve 80% of the possible applications you need to advertise on 8 sites, though which sites to use varies depending on the type of job, location etc.

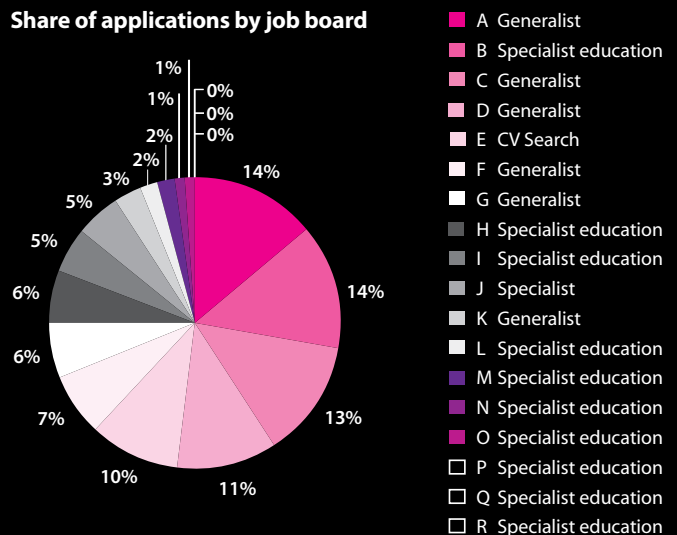
An analysis of the top 10 performing job boards included:

- 5 Generalist boards
- CV searching
- 3 Education boards
- Specialist sites

If quality had also been taken into account, then CV searching would have performed nearly 50% better than the best performing job board, accounting for 20% of all applications of interview quality.

The lessons to learn are that it is important to spread your advertising across a number of job boards rather than just sticking to one or two, to carry out CV database searches, and to adapt each campaign depending on the type of vacancy.

Share of applications by job board



About R21 media

R21 media is an online recruitment advertising agency, specialising in further and higher education. We offer colleges a comprehensive low cost online recruitment advertising package including:

- Writing the advert copy
- Advertising over a network of nearly 400 job boards
- CV database searching
- Application management

All of this is available for just £795 for a teaching post and £595 for a support role.

To find out more, please contact:

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