

All of the principles we described earlier in website design should be kept in mind when it comes to the application pages. In particular, the application portal should be simple, easy to use, informative, and up-to-date. To assess job seeker preferences, consultants from Brass Ring watched applicants go through the process of visiting organization websites, with the applicants describing their thought processes aloud. The consultants' research indicates that recruits are often frustrated by complex application systems, especially those that require them to enter the same data multiple times. To keep potential applicants from feeling disconnected from the online recruiting process, it is advisable to keep in touch with them at every stage of the process. To speed things up, some organizations inform applicants immediately if there is a mismatch between the information they provided and the job requirements; thus they can know immediately that they are not under consideration. Quickly eliminating unacceptable candidates also allows recruiters to respond more quickly to applicants who do have sufficient KSAOs. A review of online job solicitation found that the best website advertising offered special features to potential applicants, including opportunities to check where they are in the hiring process, examples of a typical "day in the life" at an organization, and useful feedback to applicants regarding their potential fit with the organization and job early in the process.

Many organizations have taken these suggestions to heart and are working to improve the functionality of their online application process. For example, Red Lobster's recruiting site was revised as part of a comprehensive effort to better leverage the organization's brand-based recruiting strategy. To facilitate exploring work options, candidates are directed through several job options on the basis of their level of experience and are provided detailed descriptions and requirements for each position before they apply. Comparing multiple jobs parallels the format many job seekers might be familiar with from e-commerce sites; essentially, applicants can "shop" for jobs. Encouraging potential applicants to carefully consider a variety of work options should lead to a better eventual person/job match. Research also shows that candidates prefer organizational websites that allow them to customize the information they receive. Candidates considering many jobs might self-select out of jobs that are not really of interest to them, which might help reduce the applicant pool to a set of more interested, qualified candidates and also reduce turnover down the line.

Employment Websites

Employment websites have evolved from their original function as job boards and database repositories of jobs and résumés to become fully featured recruiting and screening centers.⁴⁴ For employers that pay a fee, many employment websites provide services like targeted advertising, video advertising, preem-