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Direct: 586.778.8491

Email: [Sales@NowHire.com](mailto:Sales@NowHire.com)

Web: [www.NowHire.com](http://www.NowHire.com)

# Top Ten Online Recruiting Techniques

*by Glenn Gutmacher, Purple Squirrel, November 2001*

Employers and recruiting agencies alike are learning that job applicants rarely respond in sufficient numbers to newspaper ads or even to online job postings on the major Internet career sites.

The problem with many of the big Internet job sites is that when you find desirable candidates by searching their resume databases, you're probably the 35th recruiter to contact them. To avoid this "jaded candidate" effect, the key is to focus on passive job seekers. The Internet is still the most efficient tool to reach people in desired locations with specific skill sets, but the methods that works best mainly target these passive job seekers.

**Based on feedback from recruiters regarding their effectiveness, what follows is a list of top Internet recruiting methods.**

1. Large virtual communities: Sites that offer free Web page space, e-mail, and other resources to bring together people with common interests, such as [www.Angelfire.com](http://www.Angelfire.com), [www.GeoCities.com](http://www.GeoCities.com), and [www.Tripod.com](http://www.Tripod.com), have millions of members each. These sites are still relatively unused by recruiters, even though they offer sophisticated search engines attached. Let's say you need resumes of electrical engineers in Wisconsin. Just go to [www.geocities.com](http://www.geocities.com) and in the search box under "Explore Our Neighborhoods," type resume AND electrical engineer AND Wisconsin, then click the search button.
2. Niche communities: Many niche sites are effectively turned into resume databases once searchability is enabled on them. For example, if you want to target undergrads, graduate students, or faculty at particular colleges, go to [www.utexas.edu/world/personal](http://www.utexas.edu/world/personal) for links to personal pages at any of 200-plus

colleges. Alternatively, click on any of the colleges at [www.google.com/universities.html](http://www.google.com/universities.html) and type resume.htm\* in the search box.

3. Where the most resumes are: Though proprietary databases on some career sites have up to three million unique resumes, several times that number exist on personal and company pages on the Web. These can be searched—for free—using one of the growing number of search engines that support advanced Boolean search queries. You need [www.Infoseek.com](http://www.Infoseek.com), [www.HotBot.com](http://www.HotBot.com), or my favorite, [www.AltaVista.com](http://www.AltaVista.com).

To find resumes of Web designers who know JavaScript and live in Massachusetts, go to [AltaVista.com](http://AltaVista.com), click on the yellow Advanced Search folder tab, and in the "Boolean Query" box, type (url:resume OR url:vitae OR title:resume OR title:vitae OR resume OR vitae) AND ("web designer" OR "graphic designer") AND javascript AND (relocate OR (Massachusetts NEAR (781 OR 508 OR 978 OR 617))) AND NOT (job\* OR EOE OR submit OR reply OR "human resources" OR HR OR preferred). Below that, in the "Sort by:" field, type resume title: resume url:resume (then click the search button).

4. Where high-tech resumes are: While [AltaVista](http://AltaVista.com) is still good for techies, [Deja.com](http://Deja.com) is the best way to search newsgroups. Several hundred of these focus on employment, either by geography (e.g., [atl.jobs](http://atl.jobs) for jobs in Atlanta) or industry (e.g., [alt.medical](http://alt.medical) .[sales.jobs.offered](http://sales.jobs.offered) for medical sales jobs). You can find resumes on these using Boolean search syntax similar to [AltaVista's](http://AltaVista.com). A variation I like is targeting competitors.

Say you want to learn about as many people who work at GTE Internetworking (formerly BBN) as possible. All you need to know is that staffers' e-mail addresses end with [@bbn.com](mailto:@bbn.com) (at most companies, the Web domain and e-mail domain names are the same.) Go to <http://groups.google.com/> and in the "author" field, type [\\*@bbn.com](mailto:*@bbn.com) and click the search button. In the results, click the name in the author column and you will see the entire posting history of that person.

5. Virtual interviewing on campuses: Did you pass on interviewing students at many desirable colleges because of the cost and time involved in sending representatives? Today, you don't need much more than a microphone and a \$100 camera attached to your computer to do so (ISPs like [EarthLink](http://EarthLink.com) offer a QuickCam free as part of their Internet service promotions for new signups)—the videoconferencing software is often bundled. Compatible videoconferencing systems are becoming commonplace on college campuses.

6. Start an e-newsletter: Determining when a given person will be receptive to solicitations to leave his or her current employer is like trying to time the stock market. Instead, maintain ongoing contact with thousands (or more) of potential applicants by sending them a useful newsletter. The focus should be 60 percent

business news/trends geared to their industry/function, 20 percent general career tips, and only 20 percent your own job openings, with a hyperlink to the rest. The objective information is readily available online –sign up on a free industry-focused news service like Individual.com, and link to the stories that would interest the type of candidate you're targeting, or visit popular job portals like CareerMag.com for the career stories. Free e-mail list management software like the eGroups.com system lets you send your newsletter and process subscriptions 24/7, automatically.

7. Free Internet recruiting tips: Internet recruiting seminars and courses abound, but even the fee-based companies offer free e-newsletters to recruiters that you can sign up for. Maintain a list of links to these on your site, but some great information also comes from newsletters not specifically tied to recruiting. For example, if you are a headhunter trying to drum up new business, you can get reports of initial public offering (IPO) companies, which typically are in active hiring mode, via e-mail from [www.IPO.com](http://www.IPO.com). Conversely, employers looking for more candidates could employ software, such as Copernic2000 ([www.copernic.com](http://www.copernic.com)) or BullsEye ([www.intelliseek.com](http://www.intelliseek.com)) that can search for news stories about companies now downsizing.

8. Auto-responders: Applicants can send you a resume in a second via mouse-click. Are you responding in Internet time? An auto-responder sends an automated template message to the job seeker even before you have a chance to open the e-mail. If all your IT department job listings give [itjobs@yourcompany.com](mailto:itjobs@yourcompany.com) as the recruiter contact address, that results in a more customized message about your company for techies.

9. Trade associations: Your company probably pays annual dues to at least one trade group in your industry, and many have Web sites with career functionality. You may be entitled to have your jobs listed there free, as well as have access to resumes. Most companies have no brand recognition with job seekers, especially relocating ones. But candidates often check out the Web site for their trade in their state or region.

10. Free trials for paid services: Some of the fee-based Internet career services are worth the money. But which ones are best vary, based on the employer's industry, location, job title, and even time of year. Most Internet career services will offer a free trial (posting jobs, resume database access, etc.) if you press them. One service that lets you search dozens of resume databases simultaneously and doesn't charge for a 14-day free trial is Resume InfoFinder Gold ([www.infojist.com](http://www.infojist.com)).

Glenn Gutmacher, president of Recruiting-Online.com, developed the Advanced Online Recruiting Techniques seminar in 1997, the world's first Internet recruiting course offered either over the Web or in person.

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