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Experts Weigh In on Job Boards

By SARAH E. NEEDLEMAN

(See Corrections & Amplifications item [below](#).)

There are more than 60,000 job boards on the Web. Which ones should you spend your time searching?

If you were among the millions of Super Bowl viewers last month, you might be thinking about looking at sites like CareerBuilder, Monster and TheLadders. All three aired attention-grabbing commercials during the big game.

To home in on the best employment sites, we asked career experts how the big job boards measure up for professionals and where else job seekers can look.

Q: *Let's start with the popular sites like [Monster](#), [CareerBuilder](#) and [HotJobs](#). Love them or hate?*

A: "They do a nice job for very young, entry-level job hunters," says Michael Mellone, a senior consultant at ClearRock, a Boston-based outplacement firm. But for more experienced professionals, he says, industry-specific job sites such as [efinancialcareers.com](#) are more effective.

Gerry Crispin, co-founder CareerXroads, a consulting firm in Kendall Park, N.J., says CareerBuilder lacks sophistication. Recently he saw a quiz on the site that promised to give job hunters insight into what career path they should pursue based on the colors they like. "I'd be embarrassed as an employer to work with a site that uses such unprofessional approaches to career management," he says.

By contrast, Sarah Hightower Hill, chief executive officer of outplacement firm Chandler Hill Partners Inc. in Tucson, Ariz., says she likes CareerBuilder because it's easy to navigate. "The site drives you right in to the job search. It's no nonsense," she says.

Q: *What are some of your favorite job sites?*

A: For Mr. Crispin, Jobing.com wins high marks. The site specializes in advertising local employment for job hunters in 41 metro areas across the country. "They have people who physically go out and meet with professional associations that are trying to get their members hired," he says.

Mr. Crispin also favors the site for the DirectEmployers Association, [jobcentral.com](#). Job hunters interested in positions advertised on the site can click on a link to be taken directly to the employer's Web site. "You apply to the company firsthand," he says.

Additionally, Mr. Crispin points to [Craigslist.com](#) because "it's the most open, honest and transparent site out there," he says. He also cites its simplicity and ease of use. "It's also one of the most responsive," he says, referring to the company's immediate action when complaints are made. He cautions, though, that job seekers should be aware of potential job scams among the listings.

Rich Gee, an executive coach in Stamford, Conn., recommends Execunet.com. "It's a serious job site," he says. "You cut right through the noise and get to the actual job."

Q: *Execunet charges a fee to respond to its help-wanted ads. So do TheLadders and some other job boards. Are they worth paying for?*

A: "It's not a lot of money for what you get in return, which is a great filter to get to serious jobs," says Mr. Gee.

Ms. Hightower Hill says many job hunters she's worked with complain that too many employment ads on TheLadders are anonymous, making research and due diligence difficult. "It's pretty hard to follow up because you don't always know the identity of the company," she explains.

But Roy Cohen, a career counselor and executive coach in New York, says fee sites market their services too aggressively, making them less worthwhile. "They're constantly selling," he says. "It feels like you are being bombarded to upgrade your service."

Q: *Are any sites better at keeping out misleading job ads than others?*

A: "There is no site that can promise to perfectly keep away somebody who has a malicious intent," Mr. Crispin says. "However, most of the major job boards have pretty good security in place to screen it out."

Mr. Crispin notes that Craigslist.com is particularly vulnerable to the problem because it's less expensive than most job boards for posting employment ads. "It has -- and should have -- a buyer-beware warning," he says. "It's one of the hardest sites to keep clean but, Craig himself works very hard to do that."

Q: *What advice do you have for job hunters searching employment boards?*

A: Don't put too much time into them, advises Mr. Cohen. He recommends investing heavily in networking in person and online.

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Corrections & Amplifications

Michael Mellone, a senior consultant at ClearRock, a Boston-based outplacement firm, says industry-specific job sites are more effective for experienced professionals than generalist job sites. An earlier version of this article incorrectly identified one of those sites as HigherEd.com, which is not a job site.

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