

The Federal Hiring Process – Observations from Monster

It has been our pleasure to work with OPM over the past 17 months on the Recruitment One-Stop project. Over that period we have made excellent progress transforming the official federal government recruitment site (USAJOBS) to its current state. Before sharing some general observations of what could be improved with the federal hiring process, I thought it would be worth taking one minute to show you some of the progress we have made so far.

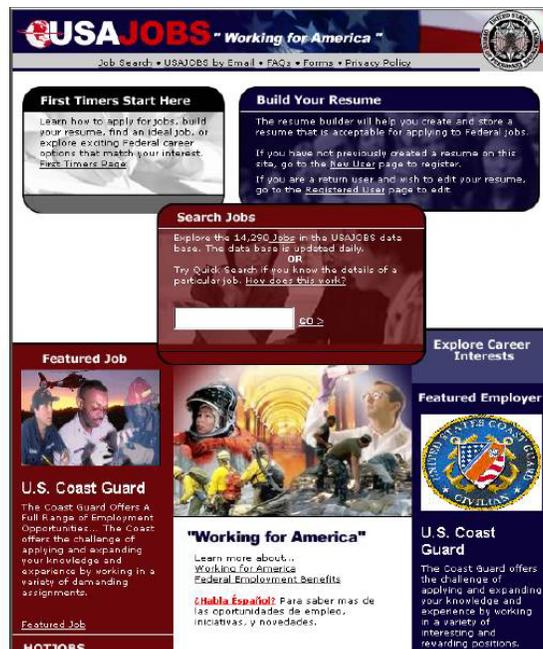


DIAGRAM 1 – THE ORIGINAL SITE

This is a snapshot of what USAJOBS looked like when we took over the contract in January 2003. In August 2003 we launched with a transitional design and then updated the site with the latest design in January 2004.



DIAGRAM 2 – THE CURRENT WEB SITE

This new website design represents the results of extensive research and user testing. USAJOBS now has all the functionality that the worlds leading job site (Monster.com) has and more.

One of the key measures we use to track the progress of USAJOBS is customer satisfaction which is monitored daily by a third party.



DIAGRAM 3 – THE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION CHART

This chart shows a standardized measure of customer satisfaction. You can see that before we launched the old USAJOBS site scored an average rating of 71. The impact of the launch caused on customer satisfaction is obvious. This sharp decline in customer satisfaction was predicted prior to launch, but what is interesting is how fast the satisfaction levels rose back to their previous levels. However the most important part of the chart is what you see post launch. OPM has worked closely with us to in a very systematic manner to analyze customer feedback and prioritize the enhancements to continuously improve satisfaction with the site. It has recently hit a high-water mark of 78, which is definitely world-class. (by comparison, Charles Schwab scores 75, Sears 73 and E*Trade 71).

One final improvement that has received tremendous feedback from both job seekers and federal recruiters are the changes that have been made to government job descriptions..

Last year our founder Jeff Taylor testified to this subcommittee and unrolled a typical government job description (which averages around 17 pages in length). Let me show you how we have transformed this with our new design.



DIAGRAM 4 – NEW TABBED JOB DESCRIPTIONS

So the point to all this is that OPM and Monster have partnered to dramatically improve USAJOBS. There are still plenty more things we can do to make USAJOBS even better for both job seekers and recruiters, but no longer can anybody point the finger at the web site as the cause for problems with the federal hiring process.

So what else needs to be done to improve the federal hiring process?

Let me start by answering a question with a question...

- How bad is it right now?
- Which agencies have the biggest problems?
- Which agencies have figured out how to optimize the federal hiring process?

These questions are rhetorical, but they illustrate an important point. How can we improve a process that is not being measured very well? Certainly the

agencies that we talk to; do not have a good handle on many of the metrics that underpin recruitment (and other HR processes). We have been able to improve and measure the satisfaction of USAJOBS because we have measurement and tracking tools in place. Well-designed and implemented metrics clearly track progress and show you where you need to make improvements.

Another area that I believe hampers the federal hiring process is the attitude and education of the HR staff doing the recruiting. In my opinion recruitment is still viewed as an administration or processing function. Most recruiters think that recruiting equals placing your job description on USAJOBS. Unfortunately 55% of USAJOBS candidates are already federal employees, so a lot of the time you are just encouraging churn and not bringing in the best talent from outside government.

The labor market is improving; the pendulum of supply and demand is swinging back towards the demand side. Federal recruiters handicapped by their ignorance of current recruiting practices will find it increasingly more difficult to fill key positions with talent from the private sector unless they get on an even playing field.

We are already seeing shortages across government in law enforcement, military hiring and intelligence positions. The IT sector is also strengthening and we will soon find demand for IT staff increasing again. There is no doubt that shortages of critical functions will impact agencies abilities to fulfill their missions.

In summary, I don't believe that biggest issues that face federal government hiring have anything to do with infrastructure or undue restrictions on hiring practices. I believe the biggest impediments to improving government hiring today are:

1. The attitudes towards recruitment by agency HR staff

2. A lack of metrics to measure and optimize the process
3. Lack of knowledge regarding current recruiting best practices by agency recruiters

I thank you for your time and the opportunity to share some of our observations with you.

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