

Eight Critical Things Economic Development Organizations Must Consider for their Job Boards

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Overview

Many Economic Development Organizations (EDOs) provide a job board or should provide a job board to better serve their communities.

For many organizations and people, job boards are considered generic. They are valued only by the number of jobs posted and the number of people who use them. But for local EDOs that serve a particular community, there are different criteria for success. If they want a job board, they need to implement it properly.

EDOs need to serve three related stakeholders. One of those stakeholders is the EDO itself. The next stakeholders are the large and small corporate clients that reside inside the purview of the EDO. The third stakeholder is the pool of job seekers in that region. Each of these stakeholders have unique and differing requirements.

Every EDO may be unique, but there are eight requirements for job boards that cut across all of these types of organizations.

This eBook will help EDOs and their corporate clients better understand the needs of the various stakeholders so they can properly select a job board that accounts for individual users needs.

The eBook Will Cover:

- Background information on EDOs and their job portal needs
- Employers and their needs
- Job seekers and their needs
- The eight fundamental requirements a job portal must have to fit the needs of everyone above
- The benefits these requirements have for EDOs, job seekers, and employers
- Decisions to be made by an EDO when setting up their job portal
- Supporting material that should be produced before launching or re-launching a job portal
- Questions to be addressed

Background information on economic development organizations and their job portal needs

Most EDOs share a common goal: jobs, jobs, jobs. To drive growth and centralize job opportunities in one place, a job board is essential. Their job boards are designed to help local small to large entrepreneurial companies recruit and hire the critical talent that they need. Smaller entrepreneurial companies simply do not have the time, resources, or market presence to know how to do this themselves. Larger entrepreneurial companies don't have the time or energy to sign up and learn a new system when they may already be posting to 20 different platforms.

In addition, EDOs exist largely for the purpose of helping these local entrepreneurial companies and need to “prove” the impact the EDOs are having on the community to their ultimate funders. This means jobs. A job portal from an EDO, then, must not only serve the needs of local companies, but also record and track as much data as possible to help prove that it has had an impact on improving these companies and the local area.

There are three primary stakeholders in the process. These are the EDO (looking to improve job growth and help local companies), the company/employer (looking for talent and to grow their company) and the job seeker (looking to join a company). Let's break down the needs of these three constituents to learn more about what is critical to their success.



Economic Development Organization Needs

Need a better understanding of their analytics to show value to their communities and to their funders.

To prove that EDOs are having an impact on the community, they need more data than most job portals offer. They need more than just “how many times a job posting has been clicked” or “how many applications have been submitted” -- they need to know how many employers have signed up and how that has been changing over time, they need to know how the number of job postings is changing over time, and they need easy access to this data so they can report it.

Want to increase the traffic and participation on their job sites and better serve the needs of their corporate customers.

A job portal that is frustrating or difficult to use will lead to job seekers not searching for jobs via the portal, and employers not posting jobs on the portal. A job portal should increase website traffic *and* participation with the portal as well. A job portal that gets a lot of page-views is useless without participation. That means companies posting new jobs regularly and job seekers that apply to those jobs.

Economic Development Needs

Part 1/3



Economic Development Organization Needs

Want to help job seekers find the best opportunities and narrow their job search to precisely match what they are seeking.

A job portal system that has advanced features for employers is useless without a way for job seekers to easily find that employer's job postings. It also doesn't help the employer if the job seekers applying to their job postings are not the right fit. Ideally, a job portal system would make it easy for job seekers to find and match with jobs that would be a good fit for both the job seeker and employer. This will not only increase visibility of an employer's job postings, but also make sure the applicants they receive are more qualified.

Need to be able to control who can post and what jobs appear

A job portal system that allows anyone to post a job can lead to a portal full of jobs that are low quality or spam, and from companies that may not even be hiring in the area the EDO is focused on. An ideal job portal system would allow an EDO to "pre-screen" what jobs show up in their portal so they reflect the quality and standards the EDO wants to represent.

Economic Development Needs

Part 2/3



Economic Development Organization Needs

Have a broad range of corporate customers from pre-revenue companies to companies with sales of hundreds of millions of dollars.

These organizations have a broad range of needs. A job portal system needs to be more than just a glorified form submission and listing tool. It needs to have advanced features that help fill the needs of both small and large companies. A job portal system will ideally exist to attract candidates to all employers, then get out of the way of larger employers with their own HR or recruiting systems, while continuing to support smaller employers that need additional resources to manage the hiring process.

Need to cater to their smaller corporate companies that need an Applicant Tracking System (or ATS)

Smaller companies sometimes need the most help from economic development organizations. Many of these smaller companies have no systematic way to track applicants that apply to their job postings, relying on tools like email or Google sheets to manage this process. By providing this out of the box for small businesses, an economic development organization can assist small businesses in the process of managing applicants and help improve their hiring processes.

Economic Development Needs

Part 3/3



Employers Needs

Want to place critical jobs and know that they are getting quality applicants

Employers have many choices of where to post job openings, and often will post a job on multiple job portals. The candidates they get from other job portals, however, may be of low quality and not local. It can also take lots of time to sort through applications (due to the quantity submitted). An EDO's job portal offers a great opportunity to provide local candidates and can provide ways to filter candidates more easily to simplify finding the ideal candidate.

Smaller entrepreneurial companies without an HR department desire an ability to track applicants through the hiring process in a simple, cheap, and effective way

An ideal job portal would have a simple Applicant Tracking System (ATS) system out of the box that would allow these smaller companies a way to track their candidates. The company can use this rather than spending money on a full fledged ATS product they don't need, or using a painful method like email or Google sheets to rank and sort their candidates.

Employer Needs

Part 1/2



**JOIN
OUR TEAM**

Employers Needs

Want to know how to craft a job posting that targets the right candidates, including the job description, salary, and benefits, and to compare what they are doing against similar companies.

An ideal job portal system for employers would provide analytics that allowed them to better target their ideal candidates. Examples include recording what job seekers liked or disliked about a job posting, what the salaries were of similar job titles in their area or in the United States, and what the ideal job description length is. Employers would then be able to take these analytics and use them to update and improve their job postings.

Employer Needs

Part 2/2



Job Seeker Needs

Want to see all relevant jobs in a given location and filter potential jobs based on criteria specific to them.

An ideal job portal system should allow job seekers powerful tools to see all jobs in an area, and filter, match, and search for jobs easily to help them find the best job fit in the fastest way possible. Job seekers that cannot do this will end up having to guess and read through many job postings, leading to mistakes in their job applications and poor fits with the companies that they apply for.

Want the job site to recommend jobs to them based on criteria that they have set

An ideal job portal system would not make a job seeker have to search the same things every time they come to the portal, or have to search across many permutations of options such as industry, salary, job title, and location to find the jobs that best fit them. Instead, it should provide matching functionality based on their personal preferences that helps them see the jobs that fit them best, leading them to spend more time crafting an ideal application and only applying to the jobs they would be the best fit for.

Job Seeker Needs

Part 1/1



Eight Fundamental Requirements

Taking the needs of the economic development organization, employer, and job seeker into account, there are 8 common fundamental requirements that job portals must have for the success of all groups. These are:

1. A High Quality User Experience for Both Corporate Clients and Job Seekers

Many EDO's their job site appeal to technology companies and the knowledge worker. These companies and people are used to a simple and powerful user experience. Having a "clunky" or out-of-date job board is a turn off for both technology companies and technology workers. Experience shows that having a poor user experience will cause these companies and workers to simply go elsewhere.

2. The Ability to Curate The Selection of Jobs That Appear on the Site

EDOs have special needs that help them determine which companies can post jobs on their job boards and which jobs may be appropriate for the job board. An administrative role is essential to block unwanted, low quality job postings that can pollute the integrity of the job board. EDOs need a permission-based job portal system that allows administrators to approve not only the companies that post on their portal, but the individual job postings they post as well.

Eight fundamental requirements Part 2/4



Eight Fundamental Requirements

3. Advanced Analytics

Both EDOs and employers would like analytics to help better understand the value of their job board. A job board needs to keep track of not only how many times a job posting has been viewed and for how long, but also how many times an “apply” button was clicked, how many applications are submitted, and how the quantity of job postings has changed over time. This is a critical “killer” feature. EDOs can use these analytics and more to see how they are helping to improve community job growth and building the amount of jobs posted and applied to on their portal. They can report these analytics to their funders to demonstrate the value they are providing. For employers, these analytics can help them improve the quality of candidates that end up applying to a job posting, increasing the quality of hires.

Eight fundamental requirements Part 1/4



Eight Fundamental Requirements

4. Better Filtering and Matching

Job seekers need better filtering and matching to find the best jobs to apply for, and employers need better filtering and matching to find the best candidates to hire. Without this, there will be frustration on both sides which will lead to less use of the job portal. Therefore, the ideal job portal should offer as much power as possible to allow both sides to filter and improve the match between the job seeker and the employer. This intelligence needs to go beyond what is available in general public job boards and provide a simple and user friendly experience. Ideally the job board can even suggest jobs to the job seeker based on their individual requirements. It should also help employers better understand what job seekers like and dislike about the job postings available, so job seekers are more likely to filter and match for their posting. Job seekers want to search specific job titles, phrases in job descriptions, filter for jobs from certain cities (or hide certain cities), filter for companies (or hide certain companies), and much more.

Eight fundamental requirements Part 1/4



Eight Fundamental Requirements

5. Automation and Scraping of Public Job Postings

Automation helps both EDOs and employers reach their goals faster. For EDOs, the ideal job portal system would easily import or scrape employers and job postings from their immediate area, allowing them to fill up their job portal with quality job postings faster and serve their community faster, rather than having an “empty” job portal that might dissuade employers from posting. Similarly, automation and scraping reduces the friction for employers to sign up and post on the job portal, preventing them from re-entering job postings that they already have on their website on a new platform. This means less to fill out during the signup process, and more focus on getting applicants.

6. Supporting Assets (Documentation and Training Videos)

EDOs want to spend as much time as they can supporting their community, and not troubleshooting simple problems from employers or job seekers. A job portal that comes with documentation and videos helps users solve their problems without having to resort to contacting the EDO for technical support. This lets economic development organizations focus on the questions that deserve their attention.

Eight fundamental requirements Part 3/4



Eight Fundamental Requirements

7. Capabilities For Smaller Companies Like an Applicant Tracking System

EDOs don't exist only to support large companies -- they also help to build smaller companies as well. Smaller employers want the ability to track applicants, interview applicants, and review applicants, but do not have funding for or knowledge of HR applications. It is essential for the EDO to provide basic level ATS capabilities to these smaller companies that lack resources. This will provide them a better chance to hire great candidates and grow their small business into a larger one.

8. Branding for the EDO

EDOs want to enhance and protect their brand. They want the job site to be theirs and they want it to make them look good. They need to have the site branded to their unique needs.

These may not be all of the capabilities that you need for a job board as an EDO, but these 8 should be considered base requirements.

Eight fundamental requirements Part 3/4



Benefits

By providing these eight critical functions, economic development organizations can provide the following benefits:

Economic Development Organization

- More participation from employers, by making it as simple as possible to sign up, import existing jobs, and providing ATS functionality that small businesses need
- Better and easier control of who can post jobs and what jobs are posted, which improves job portal quality
- Better analytics to demonstrate and prove how they are improving their local community

Employers

- Bigger applicant pool and quality of applicants through more job seeker interactions, better filtering of job applicants, and powerful job matching and job visibility
- Applicant tracking system tools helps small businesses save time and money in resume screening
- Better analytics help employers know how and where to improve their hiring process and lead to better hires

Benefits

Part 1/2



BENEFIT

Benefits

Job Seekers

- Better job pool through better filtering, matching and search functionality means more interactions and applications submitted and more time saved.

Everyone

- Supporting assets make solving problems with the job portal easier and faster, leading to less downtime, maintenance, and friction when interacting with the job portal.

Benefits

Part 2/2



Decisions to be Made by Economic Development Organizations When Setting Up Their Job Portal

Decision criteria for which companies will be permitted to post jobs.

What factors will decide whether a company is approved to post jobs on an EDO's job portal? Key factors may include location, size of company, industry, and more. Putting these factors into place allows EDOs to make decisions faster to approve or reject a company, leading to an overall more consistent experience.

Decision criteria for types of jobs which will be allowed.

What factors will decide what job postings from approved companies will be allowed to be posted on an EDO's job portal? Key factors may include whether the job posting is full time or part time, whether it is an internship or not, the level of experience required for a job, and more. Choosing these factors can help a job portal develop a niche of jobs they serve for their community.

Decision on which public job sites companies and jobs will be drawn from.

Choosing which companies and jobs to import into the system initially will help EDOs define their focus from day one, and will help structure the "culture" of the job portal.

Decisions to be Made by Economic Development Organizations When Setting Up Their Job Portal

Part 1/1



Supporting Material That Should be Produced Before Launching or Re-launching a Job Portal

Communications plan to relevant local companies

EDOs should build a communications plan that defines which employers they reach out to about their job portal and invite to the platform (or invite *back* to their platform, if they've left before in frustration). This should include marketing material showing the benefits of their job portal for the employers and a simple way for employers to show their willingness to express interest or sign up.

Additional communication with employers may include webinars of the new job portal to again demonstrate value, or focus groups to gauge interest and show support for the community.

Communications plan for interested applicants

EDOs should also build a communications plan for jobseekers to talk about their job portal and invite them to the platform (or again, possibly re-invite). This should include marketing material showing the benefits of the job portal for job seekers, and a simple way for job seekers to sign up or show interest.

Additional communication with job seekers may include workshops showing how to get hired using the new job portal software, or focus groups to help better serve job seekers.

Supporting Material That Should be Produced Before Launching or Re-launching a Job Portal

Part 1/2



Supporting Material That Should be Produced Before Launching or Re-launching a Job Portal

Training plan and materials for staff to administer the system, manage permissions and track and analyze results

For an EDO, building out or having existing documentation that explains how to administer the job portal will help address simple issues encountered by employees of an EDO. This also helps with training when turnover at an EDO happens and new employees or members need to administer or manage the system.

Training materials for local companies to get their jobs posted, track applicants and analyze results

For EDOs, building out or having existing documentation for employers that explains how to use the job portal will reduce emails and calls from confused employers with simple issues, and allow the EDO to focus on the “important” questions that employers may have.

Press release and general announcement plan

After building out the above, an EDO should have a strategy for marketing and announcing their job portal. This can include a press release, an email blast, and much more. Planning a big announcement can help secure a job portal’s success.

Supporting Material That Should be Produced Before Launching or Re-launching a Job Portal

Part 2/2



Questions To Be Addressed

- **Who at the economic development organization will be responsible for the job site?**
 - Who will be in charge of leading the job portal project?
 - Who will build out the job portal functionality for the website?
 - » Is it an IT person on staff?
 - » Is it a third party contractor that works closely with the organization?
 - » Is it a vendor who will do the implementation with an “out of the box” or “turn key” solution?
 - Who will administer the day to day operations with the site?
Will it be one person, or many?
 - » If it is many people administering the day to day operations, will roles of administration be divided, or equally shared?
- **How will support questions be handled and divided?**
 - Will technical support and general support be handled by the same person, or different people?
- **How long will we allow jobs to be posted and unfilled?**

Questions To Be Addressed

Part 1/2



Questions To Be Addressed

- **How many corporate organizations will we be supporting?**
 - Of those corporate organizations, how many or what percentage of them will request or require applicant tracking capabilities?
- **How many positions would we like to help fill in a year?**
- **How will we promote the new job site?**
- **How will we measure success?**
- **Of the above, what are our most critical criteria?**

Questions To Be Addressed

Part 2/2



Summary

EDOs are unique organizations that must satisfy not only their own needs, but the needs of the employers and job seekers that they serve as well. Existing job sites and basic job portals can't help these organizations. Specific and critical functionality is required in order for these organizations to demonstrate their value and help their constituents be successful.



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